



Fraternally
J. P. G. Quillian

THE GOLDEN LAMP:

OR, SKETCHES UPON

The Historic Scenes, Truths and Characters

OF THE BIBLE.

BY J. B. C. QUILLIAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE STAR OF REDEMPTION," ETC.



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DEDICATORY.

TO ALL LOVERS OF THE BIBLE ;
THE ONLY BOOK THAT TELLS US OF GOD, OF THE REDEEMING CROSS
AND THE HEAVENLY HOME ;
THE LIGHT THAT HAS SHONE THROUGH THE AGES ;
WHOSE PROMISES CHEER THE HUMBLE AND BELIEVING HEART,
AND WHOSE PROPHECY OVERLEAPS TIME, AND DEATH,
AND CHANGE,
GILDING WITH GLORY ALL BEYOND THE TOMB ;
THE BOOK THAT TELLS US HOW TO LIVE AND THE WAY TO DIE ;
THAT WEDS IMMORTALITY TO OUR DEATH AND THROWS
THE PEARLY GATES AJAR ;
THE ONLY APOCALYPSE BELOW THE SKIES—TO CHEER OUR
DARKNESS—TO SOOTHE OUR GRIEFS,
AND MAKE US LONG FOR THAT BRIGHT HOME,
WHICH EYE HATH NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD THE MELODY
OF ITS SONGS,
THESE SKETCHES ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

PREFATORY

Under many embarrassments not necessary to mention, the present work is now presented to the public. "The Star of Redemption," which was published in 1871, from what we can learn, has been the instrument of the conviction and conversion of some, a source of consolation to many, and like an Angel of blessing, it is still abroad, for its mission is not yet fulfilled.

With such encouragement, we have undertaken the delightful task of writing another book. Yielding to the wishes of many friends, among whom we have lived and labored so long, is our apology for the insertion of the likeness found in the volume. We have inserted a sermon preached on various occasions, on the duty of husbands to their wives. Its publication has been desired time and again, by some of the leading minds of the Church. We now embody it in book form, trusting that it will do good, when the preacher and the writer is sleeping quietly in the grave. The Bible is our text-book. Divine help has been implored to glean in the broad fields of Revelation—to trace the golden glimmerings—"Gather up the shells along the shore," and from leaflet and flower and the music of the woodland, to charm the young with the beauties of the Bible—comfort the troubled in heart, and gladden dying age with the hallowed prophecies of the Life Everlasting. We have not endeavored to pursue one line of thought—to amplify some leading truth; but in a field so broad, we have given ourselves a wider range, but have tried to keep within the bounds of probability, and believe that our views are orthodox and evangelical. Our book is written for all who love the Bible and cling to the cross. It is not marred by sectarian bitterness. We have invoked the Dove-like Spirit to bring the Olive Leaf, into this Ark of our treasured thoughts. We have endeavored to hang out our lamp along life's troubled shore—a Pharos to gleam, when the night is dark and the storm is loud. And may it shine on, till at the ford of Jordan, like Israel's wondrous pillar, it melts away into the light of Heaven.

THE AUTHOR.

Douglasville, Sept., 1881.

CHAPTER I.

A LAMP

SHINING THROUGH THE AGES.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light to my path.—Psa. 119: 105th verse.

This lamp from off the Everlasting Throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time,
Stood casting on the dark, her gracious bow.

The Psalmist uses this beautiful illustration to represent the word of God, which shine upon His works and ways, and lights the footprints of Deity amid the darkness of time. It is the Star of Bethlehem leading the poor wanderer to Christ; the pillar of fire in the howling wilderness, guiding the Israel of God to the bright lands of promise.

Light was the first thing created when all was darkness and void, and for six successive days, revealed the gradual work of the great builder of worlds. Revelation solves the mystery of the universe, chronicles the ages of time, and is full of prophecy of the life after death. As we trace the sacred page, we discover the unfolding of the redeeming plan—we feel the pulsation of Divine sympathy for our lost and alienated race. The Bible is a faithful portraiture of our natural and moral condition. It tells us why the thorn pierces the foot, and the serpent hisses in the grass, and what brings the

beaded sweat to the brow. Here we have the Divine reasons given for pains, burning fevers, and all the mysterious griefs of the human heart. We can understand what the thunder speaks, and why the lightning streams across the heavens, like the fiery coursers of an angry God; and the dreadful cyclone, like the car of Juggernaut or the herald of final Judgment, spreads death and ruin in its pathway. We know what withdrew the bloom of Eden, and why frowning Cherubims guard the way to the Tree of Life. God in His word explains those infant cries, and those wails of maternal anguish that float upon the breeze. Here the awful mystery of death is solved, and why his pale population spreads till earth has become like the valley of prophetic vision. Philosophy may vainly strive to account for its moral defacement, and to inaugurate some remedial plan, but Divine revelation explains the whole, and presents us with the only remedy—the only method of salvation, as seen in the new and living way. The wisest philosopher could not explain the existence of moral evil in the world; he sighed for something better than was taught in the schools; and longed to know more of the future life—for some mellow prophecy of the boundless hereafter.

The Bible is not only a revelation from God, but a revelation of God. It is the only book from first to last, from the opening verse of Genesis, to the closing vision of the Apocalypse that gives us a rational and satisfactory solution of the Great First Cause of all things. On the pages of Heathen Mythology, this truth is darkened by ages of superstition. The most learned reasoned like children on the subject, showing clearly the truth of inspiration that the world by wisdom knew not God.

With all their philosophy they could not understand the origin, or the evidences of design in the universe—they could not comprehend the grand harmonious combination of sevens and systems—they failed to spell out in the starry syllables of the sky the nature and the name of God. But the Bible carries us back to the dateless years before time began, when God existed alone—no burning Seraph, no harping Angel, or Songs of the Redeeming Story, but by Himself, in the full possession of all His peculiar attributes, invested with the infinite perfections that make up the Godhead. Whenever and wherever we open the Bible we find it full of God. His character is unveiled upon its pages; it is an external manifestation of the Great Author of all things—of Him with whom we have to do. Here are views of His character presented which the human mind could never have conceived. An inspired Apostle, caught up amid the visions and revelations of the third heaven, cries out in astonishment: “Oh! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”

God held the hand that wrote his burning words.

He spread out the canvas on which the glowing pencil of Inspiration traced the successive revelations of the Divine will, the changes and events of Time, the onward roll of its ages, and the glory of final triumph. No book but the Bible carries us back into the sacred retirement of God's Eternity, where Angels bend in awe and wonder and thought is bewildered and lost amid the bright effulgence of a glory indescribable. We have the revealings of His purpose to save the world by a plan Godlike in its inception and all its remedial appliances, a scheme new and unheard of and startling to the Thrones

of Heaven. The Bible only explains the mystery of Creation. It tells us how the worlds were made, giving us a simple and rational account, contrary to the science and perplexed philosophy of ancient times. How wonderfully sublime is the first verse of Genesis : "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth!"

It was this thought that so bewildered the unenlightened mind, that all things were created by the word of His power, that the universe sprang into being by His word. He said, "Let there be light, and there was light."

At God's command countless camp fires were lighted through all the unbounded sky. Why such a vast array of worlds, clustering stars, and sun flaming to sun? They illustrate the wonders of Almighty Power and display His wisdom from age to age. The Scriptures present us views of the Providence of God which could never have been known but by Divine Revelation—a Providence extending to all parts of His dominion, regulating its laws and directing the whole. His particular Providence shows that He rules in the affairs of men, "Thus demonstrating His supremacy and power in countervailing the designs of His creatures and accomplishing His own ;" a Providence that numbers the hairs of the head, watches the blooming of the flower and sees the sparrow as it falls to the ground. Like a pitying father watching over his erring children, He will number their steps and order their way. He will not forsake them in feebleness and declining age, when the strong men bow themselves and the grasshopper is a burden. He will hand them gently down to their last sleep. Angels will guard the soft repose, and the undistinguished grave shall be green in the memory of

God. There is no conflict between His general and His particular Providence. It may at times have the appearance of a wheel within a wheel ; there may be much that is dark to us ; but the spirit of the Living One is upon the wheels, and all things shall work together for good. The Judge of all the earth will do right ; His plans and purposes extend through the long ages of Time and the unending cycles of the world to come. How sublimely wonderful are those Scripture views of the God of Providence ! How infinite the width and range of the Divine Presence—high as Heaven, deep down as Hell !—ranging through all His wide dominions, listening to the song of angels, to the cries of penitence and the wails of earthly grief ! How tender is the Divine Solitude ! What ample provision has been made ! The Almighty Father hangs the universe upon His arm and satisfieth the desire of every living thing ! But the greatest thought revealed in the Bible is the Redemption of Man. In the center of this book this work of Redeeming Mercy is revealed—the Mystery hid from ages—the grand central thought of Christianity forming its Alpha and Omega, its beginning and end. The Scriptures everywhere represent this work as the work of God, while Creation and Providence are made subservient to the grand remedial economy of Heaven. It was no afterthought of God ; it was no thought incidental to our fallen state, but a great forethought. Christianity is a revelation of the hidden wisdom ordained before the world for our glory—a work in which all the Godhead were engaged, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

It is true the human mind might have thought of some method of Recovery, but it never would have

thought of such a method as the Scriptures reveal. Had human wisdom devised the plan, it would have been human like ourselves and subject to modification and change. It would have had no reference to a violated law, to the injured, insulted majesty of Heaven. It would have been a system of arbitrary mercy, saving alike fallen angels and fallen men. But the heaven-devised scheme of human recovery excites the wonder and astonishment of the unfallen creation of God. In the Tabernacle and in the Temple they were represented as bending over the blood-besprinkled mercy seat, to show the interest of unfallen spirits in the coming Redemption. How shall man be just with God? was the problem of ages, and only explained by the incarnation of the Redeemer and the mysterious scenes of the Garden and the Cross. The Cross stands upon the hilltop of time, midway between the song of the morning stars and the clangoring trump of the great Archangel. Redemption inspires feelings and hopes which nothing else could, and spreads out a range of thought new and wonderful to the human mind. The most learned in council for ages could never have conceived of such a plan. God alone could save that which was lost—bring back our alienated race and gather from the depths of sin the countless jewels of the Redeemer's crown.

Here we have the Mystery of Mysteries—the union of the two natures, divine and human, in the person of Christ. This is the great Mystery of Godliness—God manifested in the flesh. It is a depth we have no line to fathom, where even angelic thoughts are drowned. The bleeding cross, the universe in gloom and the opening graves of the sainted dead, hushed all the harps of

Immortality, and Heaven has never yet recovered from the sacred consternation.

Heathen Mythology, Romance and Song never thought of such a person as Christ—of one so pure and sinless all his life long. The Lamb of God without blemish, He was innocence itself, living and embodied. From the judgment hall of Pilate we hear the words: “I find no fault in this man;” and the Centurion near His cross smote his anguished bosom, saying, “Surely this was a righteous man.” Devils trembled as He approached, fearful of the coming doom, and begged for a lingering vengeance. But crowding all down through the starry worlds, along the pathway of clouds, the voice of the Father is borne: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

How grand was the Divine method of Redemption! God becomes man, the Creator becomes a creature, the Lawgiver a subject, and learned obedience as a Son! He who never knew in all the eternity of the past one hour of the intermission of heavenly joy becomes the Man of Sorrows, and weeps along from Bethlehem to Calvary. He who never learned could write. He was not brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, the fountain-head of Jewish literature, but in an obscure town of Galilee; and yet in Him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

How wondrous and complex his nature! At the same time the Son of Man on earth and the Son of Man in Heaven! He wept, and angels wondered. He hungered—and all the resources of Immortality at his command! The Fountain-head of Life Eternal begged for a drink of water, an infant in his manger cradle is to be

the final Judge of quick and dead, seated on his great white Throne!

And when we refer to the catastrophe of his death—to the design of those sufferings, to the wonderful effects of his bloody immolation on the cross—we know that Fancy never pictured the scene. It is no human tale of woe. It is unlike the wails of earthly grief for the loss of kindred or friends. It was Divine procedure from first to last, culminating in the wonders of the cross—the mysterious blending of the two natures. One was the unseen Altar; the other, the bleeding Sacrifice. The sun at midday was darkened, the earth trembled, the solid rocks were rent asunder. Many graves were opened when there were heard groans—dying groans—coming down from Calvary.

And how awfully mysterious the thought that Christ was deserted in the last hour—the beloved Son forsaken by the Father! This seems to have been concealed from His human nature and to have struck the dying Redeemer with astonishment. He cried out so piteously and wild the universe shuddered, and it rolled like a resurrection voice through all the chambers of the dead: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!” No death was ever attended with such wonders before. For three dreadful hours all nature mourned. It was the frown of insulted Heaven, and seemed to presage the last great day of doom.

The cross and its tragic scenes was God’s method of Redemption. The innocent must suffer for the guilty, the just for the unjust. The precious blood of Christ must be shed, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God. You may read about the Man of Sorrows, you may trace every page of the

Evangelic Story from the Manger of Bethlehem on to Calvary, and to the sacred spot where the angels said, "Come see the place where the Lord lay," and no such character had ever appeared before. His mission was love. He came to bind up the broken hearted and send the light of hope into our darkened homes. He broke the scepter of Death. The winds and the sea obeyed him. He preached his own gospel and proclaimed the year of jubilee for earth's anguished and dying millions. The universe sympathized with him when dying. Sleeping saints awoke unexpectedly long before the Resurrection morning. An angel unbarred His tomb. Twenty thousand shouted the triumphs of His coronation hour.

He left behind Him the impress of Divinity, and now ever liveth to make intercession, applying from the Throne what He purchased on the Cross. Angels sang His natal song and shouted when His work was done. It is the old, old story always new. It gives inspiration to the lullabys of childhood and is the prelibation of joys immortal in the chamber of dying age. Full of heavenly triumph, the last words of the dying Christ, "It is finished," roll down with the ages. But language fails and thought staggers, speechless. We bend and listen to the song; we point to the glory of the place where Christ is all in all.

The Truth of Christianity is further exemplified, as affording an antidote for death, preparing us for the last painful sickness and the dying strife. Infidels most generally renounce their faith in a dying hour, as insufficient and unable to sustain them in the last conflict. But the Christian holds on to his with a firmer grasp. It is the only sure foundation amid the swellings of Jor-

dan, the sheet anchor of the soul when flesh and heart fail. The great Spanish navigator, Ponce De Leon, searched in vain among the swamps and lowlands of Florida to find the Immortal Fountain which tradition had said would restore the old back to youth again, but the search was fruitless. He experienced no state of blissful rejuvenescence. In all the wide waste of earth no such purling stream is found. Men of the learned professions, masters of the healing art, have never yet found a remedy—no matchless sanative, no universal panacea. But we have it in the Gospel. Here is the heavenly lotion, the Physician and the Balm of Gilead. Here bloom the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. Here is the box of precious perfume, anointing us for the day of our death and burial. In the Gospel Life and Immortality have been brought to light. Here is the well of water springing up into Life Eternal.

Christ has said that he is the Resurrection and the Life, and that he that liveth and believeth in Him shall never die. The Christian may fall asleep. He may depart. But it is only going home. He may be absent from the body; but he will be present with the Lord. Death has lost its sting, and the grave its victory. Bonaparte crossing the Alps, Wellington victorious on the field of Waterloo, or Alexander conquering the world—these victories all pale before the triumphs of the dying Christian.

Go into the chamber of that dying consumptive. It is an humble dwelling; there are no signs of luxury or wealth; no odor of costly viands; the head is not pillowed upon down; but one lone candle burns, and a few tearful friends are gathered around. It is night, and everything is solemn and impressive. The faithful

watch dog, as if conscious of a great sorrow, sets up a mournful howl. There are sobs of grief, but the patient sufferer tries to smile away their tears. She summons all her strength to sing a verse or two of some battle hymn of the Church. It is like the last sweet notes of the dying swan. She points to the angel convoy as they crowd upon the scene. To her friends she says: "Do not weep for me; I am going home. Do not break my heart. Sing for me, as I cross over Jordan,

'Bright angels have from glory come!'

Jesus beckons me away. Farewell to loved ones"—a sweet, short farewell—a word unknown in the dialect of Heaven. All hail, ye white-robed millions gathering along eternal shores!

The fact of the Resurrection is a further proof of the Divinity of the Scriptures. The body—this heavy clog and incumbrance of the soul, which human reason consigns to dust, which sense locks up in the dark sepulchre and science scatters to the winds—its resurrection is a thought too wonderful for the human mind. The wise men of Athens mocked when Paul preached it from Mars Hill. It is peculiarly a Bible doctrine, a subject of Divine Revelation. We are told that when the Archangel's trumpet sounds, the countless dead from their graves and from the unfathomed depths of the ocean shall come forth to meet their final Judge. This is the wonder of wonders—the closing scene, the vast assembly of saints and angels and the uncounted millions of the lost, the day of grand assize, and the wild uproar of dissolving worlds! Draw aside the curtain, listen to the voice of the Archangel and the sound of the trumpet of God. See the sun blown out and the moon turn to

blood, and stars, like untimely figs, fall from Heaven. The Tribunal Throne is seen, whiter than the driven snow, while ten thousand times ten thousand follow in His train. All who are in their graves shall come forth, those who have done good to the Resurrection of Life, and those who have done evil to the Resurrection of Damnation.

The dead in Christ shall have part in the first Resurrection. On such the second death shall have no power. Like Lot escaping out of Sodom, the universal conflagration will not begin till all his sleeping saints are safely housed. Not one shall be left behind. Ministering angels shall fly abroad to gather up the golden sheaves for heavenly barns. Countless graves, unmarked and unknown, will now burn, a light spot to the skies. They lived and died unknown to fame, but angels convoyed their happy spirits home. Now they return to gather up the body, and chime in their song with the triumphant acclaim: "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?"

The triumph of Christianity over death and the grave is grandly illustrative of its Divinity and Power. Religion ends well: "At evening time it is light." Grace triumphs over every fear, and the good man's dying chamber is quite on the verge of Heaven. Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs of the Crucified One have all realized its power to save. They have gotten the victory, and, robed in white, they gather on the banks of the bright flowing river, beyond the reach of sorrow and the reign of death.

How precious to our bleeding hearts is the memory of the last words of dying friends! They come floating back from the border land, like the chorus of angelic

songs, to charm our grief and woo us on to their sun-bright home.

Many of our jewels are buried out of sight. The graves of friendship thicken all about us. "There is no union here of hearts that has not here an end." Wherever we turn "Old Mother Earth is lying with her dead children in her arms." The golden lamp of Heavenly Truth relumes the night of death and shows us angelic forms in the dark sepulchre. Our dying friends, like the Redeemer, having loved us in life, they loved us to the end. Their only regrets were for the friends they were leaving behind. But we trace their wondrous flight, and Faith sees the pearly gates ajar and hears the hal-l-el-ujah welcome of numbers without number.

My thoughts wander back over the tearful past. Hung up in the chamber of imagery many familiar faces beam down upon me. I cannot mention all, but their names are in the Book of Life—they are held in everlasting remembrance. They increase the cloud of witnesses in the Church Militant and will help to swell the mighty aggregate of the redeemed in Heaven. My beloved sister died praying for death, so as to be relieved from suffering. My brother, Rev. S. C. Quillian, literally preached himself to death. He fell a martyr at his post, but victorious was his fall. Among his last words were: "Tell my brethren of the Conference I die with a bright prospect of a glorious inheritance."

On a Sabbath evening I was called to the bedside of Mrs. Maggie Winn. She was a young wife and mother. Life had many endearments, but consumption had withered the bloom on her cheek and her wasted form was growing cold in Death's chilly waters. Never did I witness such a peaceful triumph. While we sang she

clapped her icy hands, and we felt that Heaven and the angels were about us. A few years ago, in the city of Atlanta, Mrs. Ella Bookout bade her weeping friends farewell, and then with a shout of triumph left for her home in the skies. Her affections were so pure, she was so kind and devoted! To know her was to love her. Beautiful in her form and features, those who knew and loved her on earth will recognize her at once in Heaven—the sparkle of her black eye and the “smile which o’er each feature plays.” The closing scene will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. It reminds us of Tabor or some vision of the Apocalypse. Could a thin veil have been drawn aside the Chariot of God would have been seen, and the Angel Postillion, ready to obey the summons and pass with the speed of light over the Everlasting Hills.

She sings now with the angels, and sometimes wanders along the flowery borders, thinking of those she loves, while now and then she looks down the starry way to see if they are coming. Gentle one, farewell. With your Ministering Spirit we make an assignation to meet you amid the rosy bowers of the heavenly Paradise!

Mrs. Louisa C. Jones, wife of Col. Seaborn Jones, died at Rockmart, Ga., in August, 1874. She was the daughter of Col. Charles S. and Mrs. Elmira Guyton, who is now the widow of Rev. L. T. Mizelle. The counsel and example of such a mother had much to do in the formation of her religious character. It has been truly said that Death loves a shining mark. Intelligent and accomplished; surrounded with wealth and many kind friends; young, and the future bright with hope and promise, but consumption marked her for its vic-

tim. She tried the balmy air of Florida and the medicinal springs of Northern Georgia ; but all to no purpose. In the quiet of her own home she lay down to die. Patient and resigned to her Heavenly Father's will, she waited till her change should come ; and when the pale messenger arrived she exclaimed in glad surprise, " If this be death, what a glorious thing to die ! "

Some weeks before, she was favored with a vision of the closing scene and the life after death. To her pastor she said :

" What I tell you now is as sacred to me as my own soul. Just the other day, when lying on my bed, I threw my handkerchief over my face and was thinking of Heaven, when a scene as natural as life presented itself. I was sitting on the moss-covered banks of a beautiful river ; sweet flowers were exhaling their fragrance all around ; the clear sparkling waters were rolling quietly past. Noiselessly a beautiful boat ran its prow out on the bank near my feet and the cherubic oarsman invited me aboard. As I stepped into the boat I saw on the other bank a place of heavenly grandeur, and as I neared it the Rose of Sharon met my raptured vision, and we disembarked amid the sound of angels' harps and heavenly music. Conducted further through the golden street, the pearly gates of the Palace stood ajar, and I was given a place on the right hand of the King, whom I recognized immediately as my precious Saviour, the world's Redeemer."

How many have passed away in peace and holy triumph ! They live now the Life Eternal, in the bright Forever, where there is no To-morrow. Suffering, tears and death are all behind.

" O ye who are persecuted now, your enemies will get

off the track after awhile, and all will speak well of you among the Thrones. Ho ye who are sick now ! No medicine to take there. One breath of the eternal hills will thrill you with immortal vigor. And ye who are lonesome now, there will be a million spirits to welcome you into their companionship. O ye bereft souls, there will be no grave-digger's spade that will cleave the side of that hill, and there will be no dirge wailing from that Temple. The River of God, deep as the Joy of Heaven, will roll on between banks odorous with balm and over depths bright with jewels and under skies roseate with gladness—argosies of light going down the stream to the stroke of glittering oar and the song of angels ! not one sigh in the wind, not one tear mingling with the waters.

CHAPTER II.

LOOKING FOR THE CITY OF GOD.

For he looked for a City, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.—Heb. 11: 10.

O City so fair of pearl and gold,
Beyond the silent sea !
My soul cries out from its prison house
For the home that waits for me.

Sacred history is richly embellished with the name and virtues of the Patriarch, Abraham. He holds a distinguished place as the founder of the Jewish Church and nation—venerable for his piety, for the strength of his faith, his constant and unwearied devotion and the manifestations of God and goodness which he so often received. In Abraham's history we have the commencement of a new dispensation in religion, adumbrations of a glory that should follow, of the coming fullness of times and the universal brotherhood of the nations.

It was necessary that a Church should be formed, a separate society, some outward distinction to serve as a wall of partition. Before this the pious and believing ones had been too much mixed up with the world. It was this that brought on the flood and the idolatry of postdiluvian times. In Abraham's day it was universal. On hill tops and groves of the feathery palm their altars flamed as orisons to the rising sun ; their vespers made

the night more hideous as the starry host rode out upon the sky, with the Great Bear circling the Pole, with Arcturus and his sons, and the glittering belt of Orion. That was the dark period of the world's history, which gave birth to astrological science. Then the angel Hope looked sad as orphanage, Superstition raved, and the fair heavens blushed. Crime was everywhere; piety was almost unknown. To save Religion from complete extinction God interposed. He did not direct Abram to build another ark, to erect a tower, to wall in a city. There were no wondrous exhibitions of Divine Power. He selected a particular person to be the founder of a Church and nation, that should be the asylum of Religion, the depository of divine doctrines, of types and prophecies relating to the Messiah, which gradually trained them up for his advent.

The coming one in whom all nations were to be blessed was to be a partaker of flesh and blood, and he was to be of Abraham's seed, a descendant in his line. And the great event of his call happened about equally distant between the expulsion from the earthly Paradise and the mysterious incarnation of the Redeemer.

Here was the commencement of the visible Church; here arose the Star of Hope, which is still in the ascendant and shall ultimately from the "zenith of its glory pour a redeeming radiance upon all the world." In Abraham were the roots of the tree of God's own planting, whose branches will shelter the nations, and at last shall be transplanted from earthly soil to the Paradise of God. By faith Enoch was translated, Noah built the ark, Moses rejected the offered crown of the Pharaohs, the mouths of lions were stopped, the violence of fire subdued, and the army of the Aliens put to flight.

But in Abraham we have the most wonderful illustration of faith in God. The design of the Apostle in referring to the faith of the ancient saints was to confirm the Hebrews in their faith and to embolden them to suffer all things, even death itself, rather than cast it away. Among all the illustrious examples of faith Abraham stands out first and foremost. He is the Father of the Faithful, the spiritual progenitor of the myriads of believers to the end of time. We have four instances of his faith: His going out at the call of God, his sojourn in the Land of Promise, his faith in the Divine promises relative to the births of Isaac and of the Messiah, and the faith to obey the command to offer up Isaac.

Abraham, when called to leave kindred and native land, did not stop to question or reason upon the subject. He conferred not with flesh and blood, but obeyed at once, and went out, not knowing whither he went. His whole sojourn in the land of Canaan—his tent moving from Dan to Bersheba and his smoking altars—were but continued illustrations of his faith in God. The earthly Canaan was an instituted type of the heavenly. It was the earthly home of God's people—their promised inheritance. Here was the Temple and its mysterious service, the Temple built after a Divine model and typical and significant in all its parts. Here were the ever-burning fire kindled from Heaven upon its altar, the blood-besprinkled mercy seat, the hovering cherubim, the out-beaming shekinah and the Holy of Holies—all designed to impress the mind and to inspire the heart with hope, to keep alive the expectation and hurry on the fullness of times, when the desire of all nations would come, when Christ should be incarnated and suffer and die for the Redemption of Mankind.

Within the geographical limits of the earthly Canaan he was to be born. Though he was of the house of David, in Judah's royal and sceptered line, yet the metropolis of the nation was not to be the place of his birth. The little city of Bethlehem was to be thus dignified. Here he was to be born and cradled. Shepherds upon the surrounding plains left their flocks and made haste to see the wondrous sight. A star in the east arose, and over the place where the young child was, hung its golden lamp, while trooping angels swept down from the sky with gladder hearts than when they shouted in the morning of time.

Here in this sacred land was the overflowing Jordan, the stream of more than classic memory. Here were the paths along which his weary feet often trod; the humble homes his presence blessed; the vacant graves he robbed of their dead. Here were Gethsemane, Mount Calvary, the deserted tomb in the Garden, and Mount Olivet, from which, like a living glory, he ascended to Heaven.

Abraham had no fixed or permanent abode in the land of Canaan. He traveled through the length and breadth of it, thus showing the pilgrim character of the Christian life—that we are looking for a better country, even a heavenly; that we are strangers and pilgrims, away from home, and journeying towards home. The Christian is in the world, but not of the world; he feels that he has here no continuing city, but is seeking one to come. He dwells in a tabernacle or tent, with top and sides, but no foundation, and liable any moment to be stretched upon the ground a darkened ruin. But, in the language of the Apostle, he desires to be clothed upon with his house, which is from Heaven.

The reliance of the Patriarch upon the promises made of the births of Isaac and of the Messiah—this was the faith accounted to him for Righteousness; a faith which had to contend with apparent impossibilities—natural barriers which human reason could not surmount. Its accomplishment required the exercise of the miraculous power of God. The birth of Isaac may be classed with the miracles of Scripture. A miracle is defined as something which happens contrary to the established order of nature; and God appeals to the constancy and regularity of Nature as a proof of the fulfillment of His word, for Nature has never yet been known to deviate from her constant and regular course but to give evidence to the truth and power of God.

Long years and many difficulties tried the faith of the Patriarch, but he knew in whom he had believed; he staggered not, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. The severest trial of his life was the command to offer up Isaac. He had left his native land, the scenes of childhood and the graves of kindred; the beauty of Sarah had captivated kings and endangered his own life, but no trial was to be compared with the sacrifice of the child of promise.

But faith triumphed, and nerved his heart to meet the crisis. He believed that the child whose birth was supernatural could be raised from the dead by the same power, before one promise of God should fail; and when the animal was taken, and offered instead of his son, his views of Atonement were enlarged, his faith was strengthened, and, looking down the oncoming ages, he saw the day of Christ and was glad. In receiving back his child in the flowing blood of the slaughtered victim,

he saw illustrated the grand evangelic announcement :
“ I have found a ransom.”

This seems to have been the last great trial of his life. He had some domestic troubles, and the dear partner of his joys and sorrows was removed by death ; but he had no more severe tests of his faith and obedience. From the height of Moriah down to the shady burial-ground of Machpelah his pilgrim way was more smooth and easy. Its tears and bereavements had the mellow assurances of reunion again in a land where deaths and partings are unknown.

Abraham waited long for the fulfillment of the promise. Twenty-five years rolled slowly away before Isaac was born. In the language of the Apostle, “ So after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise,” or, in other words, the fulfillment of the promise. The promises of God are not always immediately accomplished, and hence there must be a period of patient enduring. He may seem to delay, but He is not slack concerning his promise. He will not be behind the appointed time.

How long did Joseph have to wait before his dreams were fulfilled ! The posterity of Abraham were to be in bondage for four hundred years, and when these centuries had passed, on the “ self-same day,” as the inspired historian says, when the bell of time struck the predestined hour the thousands of Israel moved out from the house of bondage. And every believer knows from experience how often his faith has been tried by the apparent delays of his Heavenly Father.

The battle raged, the powers of darkness gathered, victory seemed doubtful, and the banner of a thousand triumphs was about to trail in dust ; but our extremity

was His opportunity. He appears at the right time and place.

God's time is the best time, and he that believes should not make haste. God directs the campaign; Christ is the Captain of our Salvation. Having spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them openly to all the wondering ranks of Heaven, He knows how to lead us on to final victory.

The land of Canaan was promised, and yet the children of Israel were doomed to wander for forty years in a vast, howling wilderness before they could enter in. Every Christian will find out sooner or later that God will be faithful on His part, and will fulfill every promise, and that on his there must be patient waiting and endurance. Weeping may continue for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. We may not receive an immediate answer to our prayers; at times he may be long in coming, and we may wonder why his chariot wheels delay. Job at one time exclaimed: "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! I would come even to His seat and order my cause before Him." Jacob wrestled all night before he obtained the blessing. How long has the believing wife waited to see the answer of her prayers in the conversion of her husband, and sometimes grows faint and discouraged when the gospel pool is troubled and he does not step in; when seasons of revival pass, and leave him further from God and nearer to Death and Judgment!

And so with the Christian husband. He often waits through long, weary years to see the dear partner of his life numbered with the people of God. The anxious father, like Abraham praying for Ishmael, begs that his children may live before Him. It enters into his morn-

ing and evening devotions, and when all alone with God he pours into the Divine bosom the tale of his wants and sorrows.

And no one can imagine the anxiety of a Christian mother's heart for the salvation of her children. The little boy who laid his curly head upon her knee to say his evening prayers, she has watched him through all the slippery paths of youth ; and when he left the old homestead and mingled with the busy world her prayers have still followed him. A Christian mother's prayers are well nigh all-prevailing pleas. She may die and go home to her reward, and leave her child without Christ and without hope in the world, but her prayers live as memorials before God, ascending with the sweet perfume of the prayers of all saints. And during some ecstatic pause of the glorified throng, angels returning from missions of love, may bring the news—the prodigal has returned, the dead is alive, and the lost is found ; and the child of many prayers will shine as a jewel in the crown of her rejoicing forever.

There is no one, it would seem, so lost to virtue and religion as not to be moved by the recollections of such a mother. The very thought of her is like an inspiration. We may see many a face, but no smile is like hers, no voice is so familiar, no song so inspiring, as the lullabys of childhood. How melting the memories of that look of love, the soft pressure of the hand, as she kneeled in prayer and gently motioned heaven. The recollection of these things have often stopped the wayward youth, turned his thoughts to Christ, to the sainted dead, and to the heavenly home. Though we may have to sow in tears, and wait, like the husbandman, the harvest day will come and the golden grain be garnered.

The properties of faith are, trust in God—reliance upon His word, and patient waiting. It is defined by an inspired Apostle as the things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. One of the headlands of faith is to look—looking for the blessed Hope, for His coming again, for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Abraham had no inheritance in Canaan, no permanent abode. He built no house, he founded no city; he expected Canaan to be the inheritance of his posterity. But he was looking for his own mansion in heaven—in the many storied building of God; the city of which God is the builder, the Divine Architect, the palatial residence of the Most High. He laid the foundations, built up the walls of jasper, fashioned all the gates of pearl, and lavished His glory upon the whole. This is Jerusalem, the golden, the everlasting Salem of rest and peace; the Metropolis of the Universe. Here is the radiant throne of the King of Kings; Lord of Lords, of the blessed and only Potentate. Here His full-orbed glory shines, elders cast down their crowns, and thrones and powers kneel and veil their eyes. Here the heavenly harpers stand, and with them a multitude, which no man can number, all robed in white, with crowns of gold and branching palms of victory.

This is the meeting place of saints and angels, of all God's children, of évery age and clime. They will not need the light of the sun, or of the moon, for God and the Lamb are the light of it, and the nations of the saved shall walk amid its unending splendors. There will be no shades of evening, nor chilly dews of approaching night; but sacred, high, eternal noon. The Dial of Eternity points just where it did when the first

Archangel struck up the interlude of hallelujahs, without number and without end.

Our final home is called a city. It is not a town or village, but a city, vast and populous, with its countless inhabitants and its many white mansions. God laid the foundations, and they are everlasting. There will be no signs of decay through the roll of unnumbered cycles. How unlike the cities of the world, whose populations die, and ruin undermines all. How many cities, once proud and imperial, the pride and glory of nations, now lie in dust. The gloom of desolation reigns along the once busy streets, and halls of revelry and song are silent as the house of death. The vast amphitheater has been deserted by its thousands, and all blend in one common ruin.

We live in a world of changes. Whole generations go down to the grave, till death's pale population swells into uncounted millions. All things are hastening to an end: The sun ere long will grow dim with age, and Nature sink in years, the Universe be wrapped in flames and pass away with a great noise. But not so with the city of my God—the everlasting home of His sainted children. It is a city which has foundations, and shall evermore endure. God is the builder, and who can imagine the glory of the place. He is the Maker, the Ruler and Judge, and perfect order reigns. No rupture of government, nor jar in the concord of sweet sounds. The Foundations, Maker and Builder, denote the immortality of its inhabitants; their happy association with each other, with angels, with the glorified Redeemer, and God the Judge of all.

No one will ever say I am sick, and death will be unknown. Immortality beams in every eye, and blooms

on every cheek. It is the melody of every song, the hallelujah chorus swelling loud as breaking waters, or seven-fold thunder. It paints all its white mansions, and dresses its hills and valleys in living green—burnishes the walls with sapphire, and streets with shining gold. It murmurs in the waters, and radiates the throne of the Eternal. And the most humble saint is to be a pillar in the heavenly temple. He will shine forth as the sun, and eclipse all the gems of the Orient. A beggar from the steps of the rich man's door will be conveyed by the angels and throned among the Princedoms of Immortality. He goes up to join the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.

The last battle has been fought, and victory will be his everlasting song. We watched him through the last struggle, and saw him fold the banner of triumph. He shouted to hear the melody from afar, and caught glimpses of the minarets and towers of the golden city, the God-built home, the Paradise of saints and angels; the many mansioned house, which the Redeemer, like His illustrious prototype of old, is fitting up for all His countless children.

O when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend,
Where congregations ne'er break up
And Sabbaths have no end.

CHAPTER III.

THE WONDROUS VISION OF BETHEL.

This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.—Gen. 28: 17.

An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams,
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth owns, is all unworthy to survey.

We have here one of the most wonderful visions on record. When we trace the Book of Revelation we find it a grand panorama from first to last—sublime conceptions of God and the heavenly home. By the magic touch of inspiration, earth is penciled with beauty and filled with harmonies, and crowned with a diadem of stars and suns. Oriental genius, all aglow with a Divine influence, folds around with the awful drapery of the skies, till the heart of humanity trembles with fear, or bounds with the buoyancy of hope. Nature may put on the terrible; there may be the earthquake, the thunder and the storm. We may have allegory and metaphor, vision and prophecy, and from the unseen world troops of shining angels; but the still small voice will quiet our fears, excite a deeper emotion, ring like music through the chambers of the soul and throw open the inner sanctuary of our immortal being.

Prophets, apostles and saints of old, as herdsmen, vine dressers, fishermen, exiles and wanderers from home, were often trained with visions of the terrible and grand in Nature, in Providence and Redemption. They looked down through the centuries ; they saw the end from the beginning. Before them were spread out scenes of wonder, which pale and dwarf the wisdom of the world, the triumphs of genius, and the glory of conquest.

Isaac, old and blind, was passing the evening of his days at Beersheba, in the southern extremity of the Land of Canaan. The name was first given to a well of water. Here Abraham resided for a long time, and Isaac after him—sacrificing upon the Patriarchal altar, his flocks roaming over the same green fields ; and here were scenes and objects, waking up memories of the long ago. It was a fitting place to inspire devotion, to strengthen faith in the promised seed, and kindle afresh the hope of reunion with the pious dead. And here in this place, forever green in the memory of the good, and immortalized by the pencil of the inspired historian, Isaac was watching the lengthening shadows and the sands of life running slowly out, adjusting his heart and feelings to pass through the awful mystery of the dying hour.

Jacob, following the advice of a doating and crafty mother, so managed as to secure the Patriarchal blessing. The whole transaction is involved in some mystery. It had been declared before the birth of the twins that the elder should serve the younger ; that he should have all the rights of primogeniture, and in his line the Messiah should be born. Isaac seems to have strangely forgotten the Divine purpose and design, or

suffered his partiality for Esau to influence him in his dying prophetic benediction. Divine Providence left to its ordinary workings would have accomplished all, without the shameful resort to trickery and deception.

We have other examples in Scripture similar to this ; but God nowhere sanctions such means for the accomplishment of His purpose. The Redeemer of our race, though delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, yet He was by wicked hands crucified and slain.

Esau resolved at once that upon the death of his father he would have a double funeral, and, like Cain, re-enact the scene of that bloody fratricide. Isaac awoke to his direliction, to the peril of the hour, and renewed the blessing in accordance with the Divine will, and sent Jacob secretly and hurriedly away. The mother thought only for a few days, when the fury of the angry brother would cool down, and his murderous purpose would be forgotten amid the sports and excitements of the field. But it is very probable that the fond and doating mother never saw her son again. Before his return she had passed away from among the living ; she was dreamless in the home of the dead. He heard not her welcome to the scenes of his childhood ; the silence and loneliness were eloquent of death, mutation and change.

Jacob went out from Beersheba towards the lands of the East, as a lone traveler, with staff in hand, and a journey of four hundred and fifty miles before him. He had no splendid retinue, none of the pomp and equipage of wealth and position. What were his thoughts ? How sad to leave home and kindred. At last, the white tents of Isaac, and the smoke of his altar were lost in the hazy distance, and the perils of

the wilderness loomed up before him. The sun had set, the long shadows had deepened into darkness, and the star of evening was kindling his lamp in the sky. He looked about him and gathered some stones of the place and lay down to sleep. He was soon lost in refreshing slumbers, as dreams came through the multitude of thoughts and business. We imagine that his thoughts had been on the dangers to which he was exposed, on the providence of God, the ministry of angels, the blessing of Isaac, the coming Shiloh, and the gathering of the nations into one fold and under one shepherd. Jacob's dream was supernatural. He saw a mystic ladder reaching from earth to heaven—a glorious stairway, on which bright angels were ascending and descending.

That was a starlit night, of types and shadows. Patriarchs looked as through a glass darkly, and waited in faith for a fuller revelation of God. Angels walking the earth, and wondrous dreams of the night, were the silver linings of a cloud that hung over the brighter manifestation of ages yet to come. The circumstances of Jacob's dream were peculiar. They had the impress of divinity, the signature of God. The mystic ladder was designed to indicate his Divine Providence, as observing all things, and keeping up a perpetual correspondence between heaven and earth. He did not create the unnumbered worlds, which astronomical science has discovered, and then retire into high and lofty unconcern. He counts them all, sees every sun that flames in infinite depths, marks out the orbits of revolving worlds, and traces the comet in its mighty revolutions of centuries, while thrones and principedoms of the sky come and go at His bidding. His divine

observation extends to the minutest objects ; not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice, and the very hairs of our heads are numbered. The song of birds, the bloom of flowers, the murmur of streams, and the azure dome bedecked with countless stars, all illustrate the continual agency of Almighty power.

A traveler, once in the wilds of Africa, was faint and ready to die, and about to give up in despair, when he discovered a flower blooming in the desert, shedding its fragrance and sweetly unfolding beneath a burning sky, hope revived. He said to himself, "God is here," and soon deliverance came.

He who laid the foundation of the Church, in the shedding of His own blood, will never lack for instrumentalities to preserve and perpetuate it down to the latest time. God will be a present help in every time of trouble. Springs of water in the desert, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, the spacious pavilion where we may hide until the calamities be overpast. Noah, shut up in the Ark without chart or compass, he heard the roar of the storm, and was driven on the bosom of an angry flood that swept from sky to sky ; an invisible hand steered the helmless ship, till he anchored safely in the new world.

God stayed the uplifted arm of the Patriarch. Isaac was unbound from the altar, and another type of the Redeemer and the Church glowed upon the page of Revelation. The little ark, floating on the bosom of the Nile, was angel-guarded. It contained the future deliverer of Israel, and one who was to shake down the throne of the Pharaohs. The Hebrew children walked in the midst of the fiery furnace, but one, like unto the Son of God, cooled the devouring flames. Daniel was

unharméd in the den of lions. God is a wall of fire about His people. Christ, the head, is in living, loving sympathy with every suffering member of his mystical body, and He often surprises us by His presence, as He did the two disciples going to Emmaus. We little thought our Redeemer was so near.

How shall we explain these unexpected manifestations of Divine love? They may be the answer of prayers long since offered, and which, like perfume from the angel's hand, mingles with the prayers of all saints; or He may be preparing us for some coming trial, some fresh bereavement, or so intensifying our devotion as to afford us some Pisgah views of lands of promise yet to be possessed. These are our Ebenezers along the pilgrim way—scenes of Appiforum, and the Three Taverns, where we thank God and take courage. The essential presence of God fills the Universe.

Christ said in His last address, "I am no more in the world," referring to His corporeal presence; the crucified body would soon be veiled to the view of the Church till He should come again the second time without sin unto salvation. He promised the Holy Ghost in Pentecostal plentude, to abide with us as our Comforter; and to His grouped and wondering disciples, on Mount Olivet, he said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." These promises refer to His gracious presence with us—to strengthen and help, to comfort us in trouble, when the heart is wrung with anguish, and clouds and darkness gather along the path-way of life.

A storm came down upon the Galilean Sea. Christ was asleep. His disciples came to Him, crying, "Save

Lord, or we perish." He arose, rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. On that memorable night the disciples embarked, leaving their Master on the shore. The winds of Heaven were unchained, the storm howled, and darkness added terror to the scene. The hour of midnight was passed, and the angry deep still raged like the thunder of battle. When, all at once, through the deepening gloom, a human form was seen. They were alarmed, supposing it to be some angry spirit of the howling deep, but a familiar voice rang out, "It is I; be not afraid."

Faith only knows how rich is the Divine promise, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest;" help in the distressing hour, comfort when every fountain of earthly joy is dried up. It is the solace of declining age, and when stretched on the bed of death he can say with the Psalmist, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me," and heaven itself is only to be forever with the Lord. The Almighty stood at the topmost round of the wondrous ladder, renewing the Covenant made with the Fathers, and promising to be with the sleeping exile in all his wanderings. But to us, in Jesus Christ, He has become more divinely near as our Immanuel—God with us. He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. And all the scenes from the Manger to the Cross will show how much He suffered and how deeply He felt for human woe. He feels our infirmities, and understands all our mysterious griefs. Christ is our God-Man—the channel of communication between heaven and earth. And this truth was typed in the scenes of Bethel.

The base of the ladder was the ground, but its mysterious summit was lost amid the light and glory of the

heavens. So Christ has linked, in deathless union, the Godhead and the Manhood ; and, by becoming one of us, the Divinity was not tarnished, but only veiled. It was God's method to save and reconcile all things to Himself. Here, in this angel-thronged and star-gemmed way to God, we have a preintimation before the fellowship of prophets of the coming Evangel—the person and work of the promised Messiah. Heaven and earth, and God and Man, have been brought into close and vital union. Christ is our daysman—uniting the sympathies of our nature with the power of omnipotence. He was the man of sorrows, and the Eternal Son of God. He hungered, and yet He multiplied the few loaves and fishes till thousands were fed. How wondrous and complex His nature ! The fountain head of Life Eternal begs for a drink of water. An Infant, in His manger cradle, is to be the final Judge of the quick and dead, seated on his great White Throne. His death on the cross was the culmination of all mystery ; a new and living way was opened, and the work of Redemption was complete ; and these great and grand results were only accomplished by His assuming our nature, and dying the shameful death of crucifixion.

Through Christ a correspondence has been established between the two worlds. Our Divine Plenipotentiary, He manages the interests of humanity and controls the mighty agencies of the whole Universe of God. To Him it has been committed. Seated on His Mediatorial Throne, He shall reign till all enemies are subdued ; till death itself shall die and the grave is buried, and then, in the presence of angels, of principalities and powers, and the millions saved by death, He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all.

Angels crowded upon the field of Jacob's vision, along the bright way going up and down. They ascended to receive Divine orders, and descended to execute them. They were the first intelligences of Creative power—the elder-born, the morning stars, and Sons of God, who shouted and sung in the rosy morning, when the new-made world, like a pendant jewel, hung down below the skies. Their songs of richest melody, responding to the music of the spheres, and reminding us of the long Millennial day, and golden morn of heaven. Their shouting heralded the last great triumph, when angels and the glorified Church will unite in jubilant strains, loud as breaking waters or seven-fold thunder.

The greatest delight of angels is to serve, to do the will of God. They come swift as the light, sweeping along the empyrean, like the viewless winds. We may sometimes find ourselves sighing for the good old days of the world's childhood to return, when angels walked about, met and conversed with Patriarchs and Saints of old, and, like travelers, called on them at their homes. But that was a stellar age—a starlit night of types and shadows. God had not fully revealed His will, and angels appeared to renew the Divine promise and strengthen the trembling faith.

Three angels called on Abraham at noon, in the broad daylight. An inspired Apostle, referring to this incident, says he entertained angels unawares. We have a beautiful illustration of the simplicity of primitive manners. They had the appearance of travelers, and did not differ in their dress, language, or appearance from other travelers in the East. They accepted the generous hospitality of the aged Patriarch. They were without attendants, no mode of conveyance; they were on

foot, shoes with sandals, and apparently rested in the shade of one of the great oaks of Mamre. One seems to have been the chief speaker. Abraham, like the two disciples going to Emmaus, seems to have been strangely oblivious of their character. The truth finally flashes upon his mind, as he hears the Divine promise renewed and listens to the words of prophetic doom.

Jacob was returning back to the land of Canaan, and approaching the dominions of his brother Esau, he was no doubt, greatly troubled; conscience was at work, memory was busy, faith was about to fail, borne down by trooping fears, when, all at once, an army was drawn up before him, clad in the livery of Heaven, with golden armor flashing in the sunlight. They stretched across the plain, the wooded heights and dark defiles. He recognized them at once, and joyfully exclaimed, "This is God's host." From the name which he imposed upon the place, we infer that there was a division of the angelic company; that they were before and behind him. This scene in the woods illustrates what inspiration has taught, that they are all ministering spirits, and encamp around the saints.

The Prophet prayed for the young man's eyes to be opened, and he saw the whole mountain filled with horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha—an invisible army of defense: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." When the murderers of the Redeemer were crowding thick about Him He gave them to understand that He was not helpless; that if he would only ask, more than sixty thousand angels would come, and come sooner than Gabriel, when he was caused to fly swiftly down to the smoking altar, where the captive prophet prayed. A look upward

from the Man of Sorrows and they would burst from the viewless air, around the dark and bloody Gethsemane.

Though angels are spiritual things, they assume bodies of human form. Freed from disease, beyond the reach of deathlike influences, they are in every sense of the word the inheritors of Immortality. Gabriel brought Daniel an explanation of prophecy, and five hundred years from this time he was employed as the Angel of the Annunciation among the hills of Judea ; and He will perhaps blow the clangoring trumpet that wakes the dead and sounds the knell of departed time. We do not see them now with our bodily eyes, like the saints of old, but faith beholds them, and the heart feels their mysterious presence. They minister to the heirs of salvation, and pitch their tents about us as we journey. At the bed of death they are the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof, to convoy the disembodied spirit home to God. In the last great day they will reap down the harvest of earth, and gather the golden grain into heavenly barns.

Jacob's journey through the wilderness, his sleep, and his night vision—the glorious stairway leading up to heaven, with ascending and descending angels, and God in glory standing above and making a covenant with him—his setting up the rock-pillar, and pouring oil upon it, we may regard all this as emblematical of Christ and the Church. He was driven by our sins from the bosom of the Father into the wilderness of this world, and when the day of His life ended, and the twelfth hour culminated in darkness and blood, He slept the sleep of death. But rising from the grave, He set up the pillar of His Church, and called it Bethel—the house of God, and shed abroad His spirit in Pentecostal power.

Though Jacob's vision was one of the most sublime and wonderful on record, it contained no threatening, no dark, portentous cloud obscured the glory of the scene. Yet he seems to have been awfully impressed with a sense of the Divine presence—the mysterious ladder, ascending and descending angels, and God standing at the top, and heaven unfolding its living glories beyond. It was a night scene never to be forgotten, and when the morning broke over the mountains, and he awoke from sleep, he felt that God was peculiarly near. Without knowing it, he had slept on holy ground, a consecrated place—the house of God, and gateway leading up to heaven.

But such feelings of reverential awe are common in the experience of the Christian, even when He reveals Himself in love. We feel our unworthiness when we contrast ourselves with infinite purity, for it is said that the heavens are not pure in His sight, and that He charges His angels with folly. What feelings of awe will a redeemed sinner have when Jehovah is near. During seasons of great revival, when His spirit is poured out in rich abundance, reminding us of the Pentecostal baptism, the place becomes a Bethel; the very atmosphere seems permeated with a Divine influence. And there have been deathbed scenes of holy triumph, when weeping friends have felt that they were overshadowed by a Divine presence, and quite on the verge of heaven. The humble and believing Christian experiences from time to time the richest joys of the Holy Ghost—in the language of the Redeemer, the joy that is full. When God shakes His future home,

“The speechless awe which dares not move,
And all the silent Heaven of love.”

Inspired men of the olden time, and saints along life's pilgrim-way were often troubled by angelic appearances. Peter was so bewildered by the transfiguration scene that he knew not what he said, and the beloved disciple fell as dead at the feet of his glorified Redeemer.

Christian experience in its soundings reaches depths, now and then, that border on the exceeding weight of glory, and though we expect no threatened judgment, listen for no voice of doom, yet we feel that we are in the audience chamber of the Most High, passing through the shadow of eternity, where avenging angels often sweep the heavens. Our enlarged views of the Divine perfections, and of our own unworthiness, that we are sinners only saved by grace, will help us to understand the apparently paradoxical language of Scripture, where we are commanded to rejoice with fear and serve God with trembling. That Jacob trembled with fear may seem mysterious to the unconverted man; but the Christian will take the Bible view of the subject, and profit by the holy experiences of the good of every age. And there are displays of Divine glory—revelations of the seven-fold spirit, when archangels veil their eyes, and bow before the Throne.

Who would have thought that Jacob, in the morning after his night vision, with all its wonders fresh upon his mind, and vowing so sacredly before God, that these impressions would have worn away, Bethel forgotten and the pillar he set up become moss-covered. More than twenty years passed, other engagements engrossed his mind, a large family and increasing wealth, till God had to remind him of Bethel and his vows.

See that young man, with the bloom of health upon his cheek. The future is bright with hope and prom-

ise. He is in pursuit of every earthly pleasure, bent upon the gratification of every desire, and lured on by the song of the syren; but a few fleeting years, and then draw aside the curtain, and you see stretched upon a bed of languishing a pale and emaciated form. Standing near is the family physician and a tearful group of friends. The world looks poor now in the light of Eternity; and as the shadows deepen he raves in all the wildness of despair, and bitterly laments the past. Turning his pale face to the wall he prays and promises, if he can only be spared a little longer, that, with Divine help, he will devote heart and life to His service. God in mercy yields. But with returning health and former associations, those good impressions wear away, and those vows are forgotten; but God does not forget, and the next sickness may be the last. He may not be entreated then, "and laugh at his calamity, and mock when his fear cometh." O bleeding Cross, and clangoring trump of the Archangel, how many forgotten vows will be called up from the grave of years; and, like faint and tired messengers of doom, will frighten him away forever from hope and heaven.

A dark cloud rolls up the western sky; it is the great field day of heaven's artillery. The electric stream flashes from cloud to cloud, followed by deafening thunders. How many cheeks grow pale by the increasing darkness and by the roar of the storm. The stoutest heart throbs with anxiety and sends up a prayer for help; but when the strife has ended, and nature calms her agitated frame, they pretend to laugh at what they call folly, and plunge deeper into sin.

See that laboring ship, out on the rolling deep; the sails are riven into shreds and all the timbers creak. It

tries, like a thing of life, to mount the foam-crested billows. All on board expect soon to find a watery grave. Many a hard-hearted sailor will now think of home—of a mother's love, the old Family Bible, and the morning and evening devotions; but when the dangers are all past fears and promises are forgotten, as though God kept no book of remembrance; as if there would no future reckoning, no awful day of final judgment.

As Christians, are we not often derelict in duty, and fail to perform our vows? When loved ones have grown sick, and the shadows of death are seen upon the threshold, and we go to God in prayer, promising upon our knees before the mercy seat that we will live more devoted, and consecrate the whole of life to Him, our prayer is answered, we are heard in the thing that we feared. The children were about to be written motherless; the father was in the act of invoking the last blessing; the little suffering one was almost an angel, but Heaven has loaned for a longer time the jewel of our hearts, and its baby laugh is now the music of home.

Adopting the language of the Psalmist, let us say: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?"

Jacob was slow to perform his vows. Instead of repairing at once to Bethel, he, either by purchase or by the conquest of his bow, obtains a parcel of lands, makes a settlement and lingers for years. Calamities befell him, the ruin of his only daughter was a lifelong trouble. Her virgin innocence was blasted as the rose—pure like the snowflake from its cloud-home, but trampled beneath the hoof of swine. His sons smote a city with the sword. Jacob was alarmed, and but for the

terror of God upon the surrounding tribes he and his family would have been annihilated.

He is commanded to go up at once to Bethel, the false idols must be put away, and every useless ornament, they were to wash and change their raiment, in order to appear before God. And what must have been his feelings when he arrived at the place made sacred by his night vision. Looking round, he finds the stone all moss-covered that had been his pillow more than twenty years before. With his family grouped around him, he gave vent to the rushing tide of memories. He spoke of his exile, of his loneliness, his sleep and wondrous dream; of the impressions of the hour, the awful sense of the Divine Presence, when he felt that right above the sacred place was the bright open way to Heaven, through which the Divine glory streamed like the gates of morning, and the mystic ladder thronged by angels going and coming. He had wandered away, and after long years and varying fortunes he had returned again. Then he was a poor and friendless youth, with only his staff in hand. He had received all he had stipulated for, and had now returned with wealth to maintain the altar and bleating herds for sacrifice. Let the flames ascend, pour out the streams of blood.

“Here I’ll raise mine Ebenezer,
Hither by thy help I’m come.”

O, Christians, have you no Bethels to raise, no victories to celebrate! Where is the love of your espousals, those pledges of lifelong devotion, when happy in your first love? Have you forgotten the wormwood and the gall—the throes of the second birth, that dark night of agony, when you felt that God had forgotten to be gra-

cious; and that dark and thorny was the path leading to the Cross, and when in your extremity you were going to make a last effort, your beloved met you in the way, and brought you into his banqueting house, and his banner over you was love. What were your promises then? What the bonds of the gracious Covenant? How many deliverances you have had? Like Bunyan's pilgrim, you have climbed hills of difficulty, passed through scenes of humiliation, fought many a hard battle; at times shut up in doubting castle, and then from some delectable height caught glimpses of your future home. Songs have often cheered you in the house of your pilgrimage. You have lighted upon some oasis in the desert—the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. What are the memorials of the weeping journey? The bread and wine in the Eucharistic feast are the sacred emblems of His broken body and blood. But we hasten on to a time when we shall need none of these things. Memorials belong to pilgrimage and war, but that will be the day of triumph and of beatific vision. We shall not look through a glass darkly, but face to face, and know as we are known. The flame of devotion sweeps around the radiant Throne, while the seven-fold spirit burns in dazzling splendor, and through unending ages we shall but wonder and adore.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROPHETIC BENEDICTION

OF THE DYING JACOB.

By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff.—Heb. 11: 21.

O, many a spirit walks the world unheeded,
That when its veil of sadness is laid down,
Shall soar aloft with pinions unimpeded
And wear its glory like a starry crown.

Jacob was dying. He had been sick just before, and Joseph hurried away from the court of Pharaoh to visit his sick and aged father. The old have many infirmities, and Death gives frequent warnings of his approach. Sometimes the weary wheels of life stand still at once, the languid pulse stops its beating, and they let loose their feeble hold. Though it is a false security, yet who does not feel, to some extent, that while the old linger among us we are more secure; that they stand between us and the common enemy of all. They are links connecting us with a generation gone—watch-fires burning dimly on life's last hilltop. Their failing vision, tottering frames, and returning childhood, all denote the lengthening shadows; that the grave is near, and the sun of life is touching the horizon.

In Joseph's visit to his father we have a beautiful illustration of filial piety, showing that absence, long years, rank and power, had not weakened its claims. He hurried to his bedside, to minister to his wants, and show his love and devotion, and to receive for himself and children the blessing of the aged Patriarch. Though a father himself, and next to the king in power, surrounded by courtiers, and his royal chariot drawn up near the humble dwelling of the dying saint of God, he still felt that he was a son—the child of the beloved Rachael, sleeping in her lone grave in the land of promise. His doting father was soon to be numbered with the pious dead. He would be united with all the olden worthies in that land where death is not, where farewells and mournful refrains never mingle with its everlasting songs.

Jacob's eventful life was about to close. After a long and stormy voyage he was entering the desired haven. The dark and cloudy day was followed by a calm evening and a golden sunset hour. He calmly reviewed the checkered past, acknowledged the guardian care, and invoked the blessing of the great Redeeming Angel. There was one thought that seemed uppermost in his mind, which gave inspiration to all his words. This was the coming Shiloh—the promised seed of the woman. Hitherto this promise had been confined to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob. But now the dying Patriarch, under Divine influence, foretells the tribe in which the Coming One would be born, and the period in the world's history, and the grand results of the Empire of Grace.

We need not wonder at the seeming interruption of the Patriarchal blessing—pausing as if from failing strength, or tranced with some vision of the future—for

he was looking down the throned and sceptered line of Judah, and saw amid the gloomy foldings of ages yet to come the gleaming of a gory cross, and in holy triumph exclaimed: "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" How grandly impressive was this closing scene. Abraham died rejoicing amid the breaking light of the coming day of Christ. Isaac, old and blind, blessed his son in the Evangel line, and was gathered to his people. Moses gave a long valedictory address to the thousands of Israel, and then ascended the steeps of Pisgah to die. Joshua recounted the goodness of God to the assembled tribes, and announced his own departure: "Behold, I am going this day the way of all the earth." And the great captain fell victorious amid the bannered hosts of Israel. Jacob was dying, his beloved Joseph was with him, and he had brought his two sons to receive the grandfather's last blessing. But for his failing vision he might have seen some image of the beloved Rachael.

Joseph did right to take these two youths along with him, away from the splendors of a court, to see the end of all men; from gay and festive scenes to the chamber of the dying; from gorgeous halls to the humble dwelling of a dying saint, which was none other than the house of God and the gate of Heaven. Joseph had been trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and he had not neglected the religious instruction of his children. Those paramount claims had not been ignored. Children, it would seem, have ever been the objects of Divine solicitude. Under the Patriarchal and Mosaic economies they were specially remembered, while under the last and closing dispensation the Redeemer himself became a little child, pillowed on the bosom of the Virgin mother. And during His earthly ministry He took

little children in His arms and blessed them, and said :
"Of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

Many bestow great care in the education of their children, adorn their persons, and endeavor to accomplish and prepare them for what is called the higher walks of life. We would not condemn anything that would refine and elevate, but the claims of Christianity are first. There is a priceless jewel in every human breast. The one thing needful must not be neglected : It is Mary's better part, the world cannot give or take away. All the blandishments of wealth, and expiring upon a bed of down, will not ease one pain of the anguished heart, if there is no interest in the Redeemer and no good hope of the life eternal. Parents may instruct their children in the duties of religion ; they may repeat the Story of the Cross, and tell them of the consequences of sin, and paint the glory of the heavenly place ; but to render their teaching effectual there must be earnest and continued prayer, and a life consistent and harmonious with the Word of God.

Children are the daily observers of their parents, and how important to be consistent. They should not be one thing abroad and another in the family—a meek follower of the Lamb in the house of God, and a tyrant in their own—a life of consistent devotion, of pious counsel, of humble, believing prayer. It is rarely that such means as these will fail for the salvation of the young. It will charm and allure them to the Cross, and blockade the road to death and ruin. When our gray heads lie low in dust, and our seats are vacant in the house of God, may we leave representatives behind us to wear our fallen mantles, and repeat our prayers and songs. The blessed influences extending from

parents to children, like leaven, will permeate the coming generations, and grow into an ample harvest. And when the Great Shepherd of the Sheep shall come and gather our lambs into the heavenly fold, in joyful surprise we will cry out : " Behold I, and the children Thou hast given me."

Joseph's sons were just entering life, and he would take them to see an aged saint departing out of it, so as to be impressed with the solemnity of death and the importance of living like the righteous, that they might die like them. Jacob reminded them that, though born in Egypt, it was not to be their home. He incorporated them among his own children, constituting them heads of tribes. And though Jacob blessed as a Patriarch, and as a dying saint, yet as the closing scene drew near he was endowed with the spirit of inspiration, and foretold as a prophet—predicting to each of his sons, in their representative character, what would be the fortunes of their different tribes. But the father's heart is seen in the blessing of Joseph. He was the child of the beloved Rachel, separated from his brethren, sold into slavery, and raised to kingly power ; but now, as a dutiful son, he was at the bedside of the dying father—to smooth his pillow, to anticipate his wants, to receive his blessing, and bear him gently to his last resting place. Jacob leaned upon the top of his staff and worshiped. He did this, not only to support his tottering frame, but to strengthen his faith in view of the final scene. The Jews ate the Passover with their staves in their hands. Abraham sojourned in the Land of Promise, having no permanent abode. Jacob would look like a pilgrim still, and as a dying traveler he asked for his staff. This one, perhaps, had been his companion in all his wanderings.

At one time he referred to his exile from his father's house; a poor and friendless youth, he had crossed over Jordan with nothing but his staff in hand. He had received all he had stipulated for; God had blessed him with plenty, and brought him into a wealthy place; and now, about to cross the Jordan of death, he calls for his staff, for he had yet to die, and even inanimate things may help to strengthen his faith and smooth the billows of the dark rolling flood that divides the two worlds.

How conscientious was the dying Patriarch. Though the strong men had bowed themselves, and those that look out of the windows were darkened, and the grasshopper had become a burden, yet he would place himself in the best posture he could, to worship with his children for the last time. His weak and tottering frame must be supported. Christianity, it is true, does not bind us down to forms, yet everything in His service should inspire reverence and godly fear. Elders cast down their crowns, Seraphim veil their faces before the Throne and the Redeemer himself kneeled three times in the Garden of Gethsemane. So the dying Jacob struggles to get upon his knees, supporting his weary head upon his pilgrim staff. He worships now with his children, but he will soon be with the Church of the First-born, and engage in the worship of Heaven that will never end. His worship no doubt included confession. Like all good men, in the review of the past there will be much to deplore—living or dying, mercy is our only plea, the Blood of the Cross our only grounds of confidence. The Angel of the Apocalypse, as he fans to flame the bending heavens, make earth jubilant with the Redeeming Story; it will be the burden of our final triumph and roll on in harmonious numbers forever.

Jacob had much to be thankful for—the Great Angel of the Covenant had redeemed him from all evil. He thought of the time he left his father's house, an exile from home—the vision of Bethel, the angelic troop drawn up in two lines of battle for his defense, and on the night of the wrestling prayer. He had experienced many deliverances, God had fulfilled all His promises, and often surprised him with His goodness. And though his cup had been bitter, and his heart often wrung with anguish, the storms had all blown over, the heavens were no longer overcast with clouds, all was serene, and he was in sight of home.

In all human history, the dying hour is the most important. The life of probation ends, death's leaden stream and the bared Sepulchre preclude penitence and prayer. Unchanging realities follow the expiring hour and the unheaving bosom. It is an hour which, in some mysterious way, seems to retouch the whole of life, calling up so much from the grave of years. In one sense of the word, it is the Day of Judgment—the Judge has come, the Throne is set, and the Books are opened. In the language of the Prophet, as the tree falls so it will lie—as death leaves us, so judgment will find us. The last groan of dying humanity places us where our doom will be as irreversible as if the Archangel's trumpet was pealing from the vaulted skies. It must be solemn to feel that we are dying, to feel the strange sickness and the fainting pang, the mysterious hush of universal nature, the fading sunlight and the flitting visions of faces once so familiar; and every moment the awful truth is impressed, "It is I; no dream or fit of delirium." These are the chilly waters of Jordan, the mysterious ending of life's last hour. Eternity, like an omin-

ous cloud spreading over the heavens, draws nearer and still nearer. Outside of the chamber of death the gay world moves on—mirth and song, and the roll of the gilded coach are all unheard. The glassy eye is fixed upon the unseen, vast, the incomprehensible, the overshadowing eternity.

One infidel philosopher sported with death. What an awful prelude to eternal realities, to the intensified horrors of that world where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched—an immortal spirit passing to its dread account, and manifesting a stupid unconcern. It is enough, it would seem, to make angels blush, and a fearful tremor to run discordant through the harping melodies of Heaven. How strange the infatuation of sin, that the heart could be so hardened and benumbed and every fountain of emotion sealed. It is like the felon manifesting a strange delight when he sees the gallows, or the prisoner dancing in his chains. Life's last hour terminates the chances of being saved, for there is no probation beyond the grave. With the knell of the dying hour the spirit of grace no longer strives, ministering angels gaze silent upon the scene, Calvary no longer runs red with blood, and the sun of life goes down amid darkness, storm and cloud.

Death does not end our being. It is only a change in the mode and circumstances, the unbodied soul still lives on, indestructible and untiring in its activities. We know not the laws and affinities of the future life. Revelation has drawn aside the veil and solved the doubts of Pagan philosophy—teaching us that the soul is unimpaired by the dissolution of the body, the decay and rottenness of the grave. It is not doomed to the sleep of ages, nor to flee like a shadow through some

dark underground world. It is conscious still, its powers untrammelled, and every feeling intensified a thousand fold—susceptible of grief or joy, expatiating in the life to come, amid the blissful scenes where crowding angels stand, or wailing out the melancholy dirge of a spirit lost, and begging for one drop of water to cool the burning tongue. Life, death and immortality are themes of thrilling interest, before which the gay pageantry of the world and all human glory fades.

How important is life! Its moments are all golden. Child of earth and time, how feeble is your hold on life! Your foundation is in the dust, like a bubble floating on the wave—as a vapor in the changeful sky; like an arrow passing through the yielding atmosphere, or a ship, with her canvas outspread, borne over the mountain-billows. Every pulsation of the heart brings you nearer the grave, the judgment and the eternal future. One moment you may be enjoying the light of day, the next, your spirit may be wandering amid the rayless night of everlasting despair. One moment surrounded by wife and children, the next, a great shadow falls, and you find yourself in company with the angel convoy, and listening to the music of Heaven. Death may now be receiving his commission to visit your dwelling. Before the morning light some lamb of your flock may be dead, or the wife of your bosom, numbered with the angels, is on her way to her home in the skies. In the language of the Bible, you know not the day nor the hour. “In a moment the harps of Heaven may ask your hand, or the groans of the lost wail the dirge of your destiny.”

How relentless is death; how voracious the grave; and what a high carnival for corruption, earth and worms!

How solemn the hour; how awfully momentous; what infinite consequences hang upon the conflict when we stand foot to foot with the King of Terror! And we must all feel the chilling dews of death's fast approaching night. Let us walk softly across the dying room, for an immortal spirit is passing to its dread account; the pale horse and his rider have come, and the bell of Time strikes the last hour! It is the same now with the dying one as if the Angel of the Apocalypse was descending, or Gabriel lifting the silver trump to wake up all the dead. This is the way that all have went. Many have passed us on the road, and they have no posthumous existence, for not one of them has ever returned to tell us of the undiscovered country—of the thoughts and emotions of a soul immortal when free from the body. And they have went alone; no earthly friend accompanied them through the swellings of Jordan, and then returned to inform us how they climbed the nether shore, the shout of the angel throng, the glory of the heavenly place, and the cherub-guarded portal of Everlasting life.

The Christian often shudders at the thought of death; there is something about it so mysterious and untried. The sinless heart of the Redeemer was troubled in the garden of Gethsemane, and he poured out strong crying and tears; but there was a deeper trouble that anguished his humanity—the throes of a death that never dies, and the intermission of Eternal joys. The good man often fears that his faith will fail him at the last; when weak and prostrate by disease, he lies upon the bed of death, it may be the hour and power of darkness. God sometimes, for wise reasons, may permit those mysterious conflicts, to impress the living, to alarm the careless, to

stir up the lukewarm, to excite Christians to double their diligence and examine their own hearts—take soundings and feel about them, to know if their feet be on the Rock of Ages. These assaults of the cruel tempter in the dying hour reminds us of the sundown scene in the life of Abraham, when a horror and great darkness fell upon him. And they illustrate, too, the fearful import of the Apostle's words—"If the righteous are scarcely saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?" But most generally the tide of battle turns; faith is victorious; at evening time it is light; the dying Christian rises above every fear, and in holy triumph exclaims—

"My Light, my Life, my God has come,
And glory in His face appears."

The last words of dying saints are impressive, and often lead to the conversion of surviving friends. We love to cherish the memory of what they said; their dying words, and their last farewell—these come like spirit voices from the past, rolling down the tide of years. Standing on the bank of the cold dark river, they address themselves to the journey, like travelers going home. In the language of the Redeemer, we hear them say, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." I have fought the good fight, and finished my course, and am going to receive my crown; the land of promise is full in view; I see a world of spirits bright—the loved and the lost beckon me away; weep not for me when I am gone; fold my arms, close my sightless eyes, coffin and lay me gently down and meet me in Heaven.

"It is finished" were the last words of the expiring Redeemer. The Universe shuddered, and Death's leaden

scepter fell from his bony hand. It was the knell of doom to principalities and powers, and all along through the ages the militant triumphs are borne. Our fathers and mothers have taught us how to live, and shown us how to die. Like the dying swan, they sung sweetest in the last hour. These are sacred memories—precious scenes to cheer our troubled hearts as we journey on to God.

There is a gloomy reflection in reference to death. The thought of being forgotten, that our names will soon fade from the memories of the living, like the marks of the sea bird on the sand. O, to be remembered when I am gone, to be enshrined in the heart's warm affection, to be immortalized by those that love me is far more to be desired than empty penegyric, or the monumental pile. I would be glad for those I love to come, like Martha and Mary, to my grave. Let this be the Mecca of their pilgrimage, where the tears of wife and children shall mingle, when the busy scenes of the day have ended and evening's holy hour has come, let them gather about the place where I sleep, and may their devotions kindle like the first star upon the brow of approaching night. If we expect to be associated again with the pious dead, let us not forget them, but try and hold a sweet and mysterious communion with them, and all the blessed affinities of the Life Everlasting.

The saints on earth, and all the dead,
But one communion make,
All join in Christ their living head,
And of His grace partake.

There are some of God's children whose piety was silent and unobtrusive; their life flowed on like the deep and murmurless stream; but they have spoken

out at the last, and triumphed like the soldier when the final victory was gained—the sunset of life threw its magic spell over all the long years of their Christian course, and seemed to retouch the whole with the glow of the hidden life.

The peaceful triumph of the dying Christian removes much of the terrors of death; our faith is strengthened, our hope is more buoyant and the feelings of the heart are so exultant, we are ready to exclaim with Thomas, "Let us also go that we may die with Him." How many dying Christians, like Samson, accomplish more in death than while living, and make impressions that will never be removed. God is glorified in them, living and dying; these ascending Elijahs leave their falling mantels, and their memory is like ointment poured forth, more imperishable than porphyry and granite; their influence shall never die and the sacred leaven shall work through coming generations. The dying Christian feels that he must be useful to the last—having taught others how to live, he must now show them how to die. It is not expected that he should be alone, and devote all his last hours to meditation and prayer. Bunyan's pilgrims talked with their friends on the shore as they waded into the icy stream. Elijah and Elisha went on talking together till the chariot of fire swept down from the sky and parted them asunder. The Redeemer was in the act of blessing His disciples when He was separated from them. Though we may not have to die as martyrs for the truth, but we may glorify God by our patience and resignation, and our willingness to depart and be with Christ, and by our shouts of victory when we feel that the Everlasting arms are underneath and we have boldness to enter in

through the blood of Jesus. Visions of God, of Christ and Heaven, transfixed the wondering gaze of the proto-martyr Stephen. Paul exultingly cried out, "I have fought the good fight, and have finished my course." Martyrs of the Crucified One have so impressed the witnesses of their sufferings that it has been truthfully said that the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church. The last words of the dying father to his weeping little boy was like a nail in a sure place, fastened by the Master of Assemblies; his life of pious solicitude culminated in words that moved the heart like inspiration, influencing his child to follow him as he had followed Christ.

What heart is proof against the persuasive eloquence of a dying mother's love? Those smiles which seemed born of Heaven, the soft pressure of the hand, and the gentle beckon towards the skies—her stay on earth, and the glory of the closing scene still lingers in the chambers of memory like the transient visit of an angel. Let us cherish the memory of our sainted dead, and go like Martha and Mary, or Salem's weeping daughters; let us go in the blooming springtime when the birds are singing and all nature is jubilant, for it will image to the mind their sunbright home,

"Where everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flowers."

How true are the words of the Bible, "The memory of the just is blessed." Sweet is the savor of their names; it is often the anointing for our own death and burial. The most wonderful achievements of human genius, and the glory of earthly conquest, all pale before the triumphs of a soul immortal. When the dying Christian, standing on the last hill top, surveys

the boundless prospects, fields dressed in living green, and all the dazzling splendors of the City of God, his last triumph reminds us of the dying soldier who hears the shout of victory and dimly sees his country's banner proudly floating over the field of battle.

There is a variety in the conduct of dying Christians. Some give so much testimony in life there is none needed in death: they have been a living testimony for Christ. Others are calm and undismayed, and gentle as cradled slumbers, they fall on sleep. Some, like the infant which the mother tries to soothe by her lullabys, they sob out life upon the bosom of their Redeemer. Others display the prevalent spirit of the dying Christ—meek submission to the Father's will—and their last thoughts are for mother, kindred, home and heaven. Some exhibit a strength of mind that is truly wonderful, and talk of the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, and seem tranced with visions of immortality. Some are in raptures; they shout aloud upon their beds and come with singing unto Zion. Others, in the tender language of Scripture, fall on sleep. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," said Christ. "It is thus He giveth His beloved sleep." Their shouts are sometimes merged into the hallelujahs of Heaven, and the swansong of triumph is broken off in the middle of the stanza for the sweeter, louder strains of the redeemed millions on Jordan's nether shore. Some, through the sharpest pangs of death, break their way to God. Others, like Elijah in his rapid flight, they are hurried over the Everlasting hills. Some are like the mariner, who escapes to land upon some broken piece of the vessel; or, like the laboring ship with her sails all torn into shreds, she enters at last the desired haven. But

others, like some gallant bark on Albion's coast, they enter full sail the stormless port, where all the ship's company meet, the bells of Heaven ring jubilee, and the loud acclaim will roll, like breaking waters, home—home at last. The perilous voyage of life has ended, and the rude storms now sweep the ocean behind them. The pilgrimage is over and they rest their tired and dusty feet where there is no piercing thorn or serpent hissing in the grass. The last battle has been fought, and shouts of victory mingle with the music of the angel harpers and the Everlasting story of triumph. They have overtaken friends and kindred dear, and found again their lost jewels. Smiling Heaven bids them welcome to the joy that is full—to the pleasures evermore.

The dying Jacob, resting his weary head upon his pilgrim staff, his last words have been borne down to us through the ages, rich in thought and full of glorious triumph, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O, Lord."

How blest the righteous when he dies,
When sinks a weary soul to rest ;
How mildly beam the closing eyes,
How gently heaves the expiring breast.

CHAPTER V.

THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT,

AND WANDERINGS IN THE WILDERNESS.

We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said I will give it you.—Num. 10 : 29.

I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day.

When we roll back the billowy tide of Time ; when we spread abroad the great Map of Nations, we can trace the footprints of Deity and decipher the workings of the Eternal Mind. God is not an idle spectator of human events ; change and revolution but illustrate the kingdoms of Grace and Providence in the world. To the Christian there is no chapter in the history of mankind so instructive as the rise, progress, glory and decline of the Jewish nation. Four centuries of servitude had been predicted ; the predestined day was about to dawn, and Moses and Aaron were thundering in the ears of Pharaoh, "Let my people go." Had the haughty monarch have known it, they were messengers of doom charged with heavy tidings. Now was about to begin those ten consecutive judgments. God was rising up to show His great power. There were mutterings in the distance, and along the horizon was seen the dark upheaval of the cloud of destiny. Ages of crime had exhausted the Divine patience, for nations, like indi-

viduals, may sin too long, and their hoary crimes go before them to judgment. Infinite justice will rise up and make inquisition for blood. We are not to judge of the Divine character by ourself; our conceptions are too limited, our knowledge is too imperfect. God does not gratify our vain curiosity, nor stop to give us a reason for all He does. The mournful record of the past; the fate of nations; the widespread ruin of Time's grinding wheel, all illustrate His supremacy and power; that He rules in the affairs of men, and that a day of grand assize will come, "When the heavens with the burden of Godhead are bowed, and the doom of Eternity hangs upon His word."

The inhabitants of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the language of Jude, are suffering the vengeance of Eternal fire, while the sea of death shrouds and sepulchres those cities and all that was mortal of their guilty thousands. Ninevah and Babylon lie deeply buried beneath the rubbish of ages. A few straggling huts, and fishermen's nets spread on the rocks to dry, mark the place where the city of Tyre once stood—a gem of the sea and the mistress of commerce. Egypt, once the granary of the world and the proud home of Science—how has her glory declined! In the language of prophecy, she was to become one of the basest of the kingdoms. Her idolatries, and her oppressions of the people of God brought down the curse of Heaven! Her fertile plains are blighted; her cities and temples are covered by the sands of the desert; the scepter has fallen from the hand of the Pharaohs, while desolation everywhere, like the Angel of Death, spreads its wing on the blast.

The Land of Egypt was once the home of Jacob and his descendants; seventy persons formed the first colony

in Goshen. But their growing numbers alarmed the king; he trembled for the safety of his throne. To break their spirits—to crush their hopes, they were reduced to the most cruel servitude. Life was a burden; it seemed but a lingering death, till the cry of a whole people, like a wail of Gethsemane, went up to Heaven. But as a culmination of crime, and to fill up more rapidly the cup of their iniquity, a royal decree was issued for the murder of the male children. Thus, before the age of prophecy, we are reminded of the cruel Herod, the weeping Rachel and the murdered innocents of Bethlehem. The sacred historian gives us but few details; the imagination is left to fill up the horrid picture—of anguished mothers, the screams of helpless infancy, and the gloom and distress of so many thousand homes. But had the Children of Israel been indulged and caressed, they might have fallen into the superstitions of the people with whom they were surrounded. Their cruel bondage made them long for deliverance. It brought to mind the promises made to the fathers, and the inspired assurances of the dying Joseph. They were anxious to go up and possess the land—the inheritance so long promised, and where the sacred dust of the Patriarchs reposed as a pledge of the coming Tribes of Israel.

Their sufferings remind us of the afflictions of the people of God. Christianity does not promise us an exemption from all these things. The world, no doubt, is often astonished at our trials; but ours is a hidden life—a life hid with Christ in God. In the world we shall have tribulation, but in our Redeemer, peace. The cloud directing our pilgrim way has a bright as well as a dark side. The bosom of the stream

may be ruffled by the sweeping tempest of sorrow, but deep down there rolls an undercurrent which earth and hell can never trouble. "We are cast down, but not destroyed; perplexed, but not in despair; dying, and behold we live." The natural man does not understand this paradoxical language of the Apostle; but to the deeply spiritual child of God it is all plain. Like Hagar, he sees many a well of water in the desert, while others are faint and dying around. Afflictions often multiply; the most loved connections are severed; death separates husband and wife, and the child of our brightest hopes dies; the rosebud is crushed—angels steal away our little cherub, and like captive Israel, we hang our harps upon the willows; but we may look up hopefully through our tears; our child is folded upon the bosom of God—a lamb gathered into the heavenly fold. These are golden ties—links connecting us with Heaven, enlarging our unfailing treasures, and increasing our interest in the better land. With all a mother's love you watched the wasting form of your babe, till it sobbed out its little life upon your bosom; but now your heart is cheered by the words of the Good Shepherd, and hope's mellow prophecy of the life after death.

The Land of Egypt was doomed. God displayed His great power; her idols were dumb; her magicians stood aghast. The river Nile, a source of life and an object of devotion, run red with blood. There was hail mingled with fire, a phenomenon unknown in the annals of time. There was a three days' darkness, palpable even to the touch. The sun, whose light streams upon uncounted worlds, never knew such an eclipse before. No moon or stars appeared; a whole nation was sepul-

chered and breathless, waiting to hear the bell strike the end of time. We know not how these days were counted; they could not be noted upon the face of the dial, but may have been spelled out by Astrological Science. They were typical of the three hours' darkness which spread over the land and gathered about the cross when God, my Redeemer, died.

The darkness typed the everlasting doom of the finally impenitent; when hope that comes to all will never come to them. Mercy will turn to vengeance, the love of the dying Christ to wrath and flame, and over all the millions of the unhappy damned a night will settle down without a coming morn. Amid the darkness and widespread ruin of that devoted land, there was light in the dwellings of Israel. They were saved from the vengeance of the Destroying Angel, who slew all the first-born of man and of beast. That was an ever memorable hour. If the wings of the Death Angel rustled, it was not heard, for it was midnight, and darkness was upon her ebon throne. Swift as the light he swept below the stars. Every house was a house of mourning; a whole people were bereaved—a nation was in tears, and such a cry had never been heard before. The sacred historian says it was a great cry—like the plaintive refrain of a thousand minstrels.

It foreshadowed the great day of doom, when all nations shall mourn, and a slumbering world shall be aroused by the cry, which shall be heard from the equator to either pole. Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. But there was light in the dwellings of Israel, and their door posts were sprinkled with blood. The Paschal lamb was slain, and the grand commemoration Feast of the Passover

instituted. The Destroying Angel had passed over them ; their lighted dwellings and the stains of blood averted this messenger of death. But not so with the dark houses of the Egyptians ; a pale corpse and a sudden alarming cry marked the course of his rapid flight. They could not but feel that their punishment was just. They were indebted to Joseph for the preservation of their lives. Aided by the spirit of inspiration, he had read correctly the dark symbols of Pharaoh's wondrous dream, by which much people were saved alive. And yet his descendants were reduced to slavery, the male children were murdered, and such was their oppression that they cried to Heaven for deliverance. God calls Israel His first-born—one in whom He delighted. To punish the Egyptians He slays all their first-born, but His own are preserved. A flood of waters drowned the world, but Noah and his family escaped from the grave of millions. Lot was saved from the doom of Sodom, and the prophet referring to some who, by the sanctity of their lives, and their Christian communion, and who thought upon His name—they shall be mine says God, when I make up my jewels—sparkling gems in Jehovah's crown. And the Prophet Ezekiel saw a man with an inkhorn hanging at his side, and marking all those who mourned on the account of the abominations done in the city. These were not to be molested by the executioners of vengeance who followed him. And when the last loud trumpet sounds, ministering angels will come to gather the last sleeping saint, and safely house them, before the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds.

The Paschal lamb and the Passover feast were designed not only to remind them of their release from

Egyptian bondage, but to type the grand Redemption of Jesus Christ. He was the Lamb of God, pure and spotless, who was to take away the sin of the world, and whose blood had been typically shed from the beginning. He manifested the meek and uncomplaining Spirit of the Lamb in His judgment and humiliation. When arraigned before the bar of Pilate, or led fainting to Calvary, His servants would have fought, angels in crowding ranks would have come; but calm submission looked aloft and conquered all the combined powers. And the Apocalypse of glorious vision presents Him as a lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a sacramental throng of twelve times twelve thousand, the Father's name plainly written upon their foreheads. And though there were commingling sounds of many waters, a great thunder, and harpers harping with their harps, there was not a discordant note. It was the harmony of Heaven, the melodious strains of spirits redeemed, trancing the Universe with wonder, for they were the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. And the poor exiled Prophet of the Cross saw Him at another time as a lamb but newly slain in the midst of the Throne, bringing fresh to the mind the scenes of the Cross, the shedding of His precious blood for our redemption. The Apostle has said that Christ, our Passover, was slain for us, and when we assemble around the Sacramental board to commemorate His dying love in this unbloody sacrifice, in these sacred emblems, we show forth His death until He comes. Types have been fulfilled, the shadow has given way to the substance; a bloody ritual is numbered with the things that were, but from the tomb of ages, from immemorial time, stretching on towards the flood, this Passover feast was ordained

by God himself. It is continued still in the Church, and will be to the end of time. When our triumphant Head shall come to gather up His elect, to bring forth His jewelled bride, the heavenly nuptials will be celebrated, and in numbers numberless we will surround one common board and drink the wine new in our Father's kingdom.

There is no event we remember so well as the hour of our conversion, when we pass from death unto life, when our burden fell off at the foot of the Cross, and we looked up into the smiling face of our Redeemer. O, the pangs of the new birth, the throes of the spirit struggling to be free, the anguish and the joy—the dark night, followed by such a bright morning, when we emerged out of darkness into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God. It was then we set our faces Zionward and took up the line of march for Heaven. We found the pearl of great price, the golden treasure hidden in the Gospel field. No longer estrayed and wandering on the dark mountains, we are now in the fold of the Good Shepherd, among the sheep and the lambs of the flock. It is the birth hour of the soul immortal, and will be our Passover through everlasting ages, whether we join with the angel harpers or in full chorus with the great multitude, which no man can number. The children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt—not as a disciplined army drawn up and marching in line of battle, but they marched orderly and without confusion. And how remarkable is the fact, that there was not one feeble one among them—none who, from sickness or age, would have required so much attention as to have retarded their movements. The terror of God seemed to rest upon man and beast. The

Egyptians were urgent for them to be gone, and not a dog, it is said, moved his tongue. In one respect, it was a great funeral procession; for they had the bones of Joseph with them, which they had sacredly kept for two centuries or more, as a silent and voiceless pledge of their exodus from Egypt and final settlement in the Land of Promise. The night passage of the Red Sea, and the deliverance of more than two millions of people—the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts—it was a miraculous display of the power of God; a suspension of the laws of Nature, with all the dreadful accompaniments of lightning, thunder and the dark cloud. It was the starless night of destiny to the grandeur and power of Egypt, but for his own people in the sublime imagery of the Prophet, He rode upon His horses and chariots of salvation. They celebrate their deliverance in a song of triumph on the other shore, which comes floating down through the ages, rich in thought, sparkling with gems and burning with the inspiration of God.

In allusion to the sea, the passage and the song of victory, John, in his wonderful Apocalyp's, speaks of the sea of glass mingled with fire. He heard the interlude and the full chorus when the ransomed millions sung the song of Moses and of the Lamb. A fiery cloudy pillow directed their wanderings for forty years in a trackless wilderness. It was no burning world, detached from the suns and systems of astronomy, no volcanic flame, or like the wondrous equipage of the ascending Prophet; but a column of fire, broad, high, and bright enough for all to see, and to give light throughout the whole encampment. By day it was a cloud spread abroad like an ample shade, to hide the

burning sky, cool the heated desert, and lead on the wandering thousands to the Lands of Promise. It regulated all their movements—their travel by day and by night, their places of encampment and when to strike their tents. It was a symbol of the Divine Presence, vouchsafed to His people in all ages—the Comforter which is to abide with the Church forever.

Like Israel of old, we need a guide. The way is new and untried, and beset with dangers, but God has promised to be the unerring conductor of His people. He appropriates the work of our salvation to Himself. Christ came not only to tell us of the way, but to be the way. Difficulties may multiply, the wilderness at times may shut us in, Baca's vale be dry and the fountains of Marah bitter; clouds may gather thick about our pathway, but it is the office of faith to wait, and to say with one of old, "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." He is the interpreter of dark providences, and could we pierce the cloud we would see that the nether side mirrors the smiling face of Heaven. At times, no doubt. He tries us to show us our weakness and dependence. And however crushing may be the sorrow, or severe the temptation, it may be a thorn in the flesh; a messenger of Satan to buffet, till the spirit trembles as if beset on every side by the hellish troop; but His grace is to be sufficient, His strength is to be made perfect in weakness. He has promised never to leave or forsake us; that His presence will go with us to give us rest. As we travel He will march with us, when we pitch our tents the clouds will hover over, and ministering angels guard while we sleep. He will lead us unto green pastures and beside the still waters. He

will make our cause His own, and the banner of our triumph shall never trail in dust. And when necessary He will summon principalities and powers to drive back the allied hosts, or storm the strongest redoubt of hell. Having been with us in six troubles, He will not forsake us in the seventh, when confronting our last enemy. Standing foot to foot with the King of Terrors, He will feel that underneath Him are the Everlasting Arms. He will be surprised at the grace which sustains him, and in glad bewilderment will exclaim, "Tell me, my soul, can this be death?" He will be supported by the rod and staff of the Good Shepherd. A radiant bow will span the dark river. He will see bright angels crowding round and the glory of unfolding Heaven.

When the supplies which the children of Israel brought with them from the land of Egypt were exhausted He gave them manna to eat—the food of angels, the bread of Heaven. It fell gently as the dew upon their encampment—was sweet to the taste as the Book of the Apocalypse. Forty years rolled away, a whole generation found a grave in the wilderness, but the manna ceased not till they had crossed the Jordan and ate of the old corn of the land. No use for miracles now when ordinary means supplied their wants. While in the wilderness, with no human habitation and no fields of grain, the manna, like the widow's oil and meal, never failed. But now having entered the Land of Promise, the manna ceased to distill with the dew, and the cloud hanging in mid-heaven disappeared. What must have been the joy of the Israelites when they felt themselves free from the bondage of Egypt—taskmasters, the bloody executioner, and the shackles of slavery were all left behind, while prospects of the land

flowing with milk and honey loomed up before them. Old men felt the returning buoyancy of youth, the timid maiden wove garlands for the future. It was the birthday of a nation—a grand epoch; the Destroying Angel had sheathed his sword. Israel was free. It was an hour far-reaching in its influences, a wave was set in motion that would roll on and widen, till sweeping the Cross and vacant Tomb, would baptize the world with the light and glory of Redemption.

How forcibly are we reminded of conversion's hallowed hour, the love and joy of our espousal, when we felt our sins forgiven, and that we were numbered with the people of God. Our darkness was turned into light and our mourning to joy, the sun of righteousness shone full upon us and sister spirits whispered peace. Like the Israelites with their present supplies, we felt as if all our troubles were left behind. We forgot for the moment the state of temptation and trial, the dangers of the wilderness, the floods of deep waters, and the furnace of affliction; but having another spirit like Caleb and Joshua, we will pass safely through. We shall now and then find wells of water and groves of the feathery palms, and feast on the grapes of Eschol, and have Pisgah views of the rest remaining for the people of God. And by and by, when we near the stream of more than classic memory, the cold Jordan of death will be divided or narrowed down so that we may step across and find ourselves at once with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the unnumbered Israel of God. The manner, like grace, ends in glory, in all the fullness of our Fatherland. The fiery cloudy pillar of His presence dissolves into the Great Redeeming angel—the Radiant Throne and the uncreated light of Heaven.

The Jews were our examples, and they illustrate Christian experience along the journey of life. It is said at one time that the soul of the people was discouraged because of the way, the difficulties, the dangers and the length of the way. From the North of Egypt to the South of Canaan it was but a few days' journey. The sons of Jacob had traveled it more than two hundred years before. But God had divine reasons for leading them another route. The people were unarmed, not used to war, and their spirits broken by long servitude. He designed to form a theocracy—a people for Himself, to establish a Church in the wilderness, away from the busy populations, outside of the great thoroughfares of travel, where the awful stillness of the desert and solemn grandeur of the mountains would help to impress more deeply the revelations of His will. He wished to syllable out in thunder His fiery law, to reveal his true character, establish the sacred forms of worship, and inaugurate the grand ceremonial economy, which was a shadow of good things to come. It required a long time to instruct so many hundred thousands in all these things. Their frequent murmurings and rebellions caused them to wander so long in the wilderness, and their line of travel was marked by the graves of thousands.

The Christian often grows faint and tired along the thorny way. Life in some respects is a tiresome journey, many hills of difficulty to climb, and he passes through many a dark and dangerous defile, a dusty traveler, footsore and longing for home. Now and then he catches glimpses of the jewelled city, of its minarets and towers, and songs cheer him in the house of his pilgrimage. By and by he will take the last weary

step, his tent at sunrise will lie a darkened ruin. The wilderness is passed, and he has joined the white-robed millions on Jordan's nether shore. A soldier of the Cross, he has enlisted for the whole war, and it is a constant warfare. He has no time to lay aside his armor, or sleep on the post of duty. The spiritual tocsin sounds for battle, and there will be no cessation of hostilities till the shout of triumph mingles with the swellings of Jordan.

O death, where is thy sting!
O grave, where is thy victory!

The Children of Israel remained many months in the wilderness of Sinai; but they journey forth, and the cloud rested upon the wilderness of Paran, a vast and sandy desert, where they wandered for many years. It was only a removal from one wilderness to another. It was not to the land of promise, but still they were in a better condition than under the taskmasters of Egypt. How strikingly does this represent the experience of the people of God; their changes and removals. The year ends in gloom; we hail the arrival of the new one, but soon find out that it is like the other—a repetition of the buried past. All states and conditions of life have their peculiar anxieties and sorrows. It is like passing from one wilderness to another—from rosy infancy down to pale and furrowed age. One weeps for the wife of his youth; with hearts and hands united they set out upon the journey of life; but death has made his home desolate, and his children orphans; and who has not sighed for lover and friend. The most tender and endeared connections are severed. God commanded Abraham to go out from home and kindred, to

a land that He would tell him of; and yet, even in the Land of Canaan, he shared in the troubles of Lot; was directed to offer up Isaac, and with an anguished heart he journeyed three days to the designated place. He buried his beloved Sarah out of sight, and though in the land of promise, he had no fixed abode. He was not at home; by faith he was looking for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Our journeyings are in the desert, but it is better than the fleshpots of Egypt, and we have Canaan's goodly land in view. But such a state of things is not casual. God chooses our changes; He knows the way we take. The cloud moves out and rests upon the howling desert, or hangs over the flinty rock that pours forth the gushing stream of water. He is our leader, and we have with us Moses and Aaron and all the Prophets, the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, the Apostles of the Crucified One, the pure stream of truth, and all the historic memories of the past. A few more encampments, and our tents will be pitched to strike no more. A few more conflicts, and the banner of our triumph shall wave along the Eternal shores; the ten days' tribulation ends, and glory begins, lasting as Heaven. It is the laborer, resting when the burden and heat of the day have ended; the soldier reposing upon his laurels; the song of the reapers, when they all unite and sing Harvest Home. The weary traveler, after a long absence, crosses at one of the fords of Jordan and goes up to receive his inheritance—to greet his old companions, and gather about him again the wife of his youth and all the children of their mutual love. Here, too, will be the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, whose names are written in Heaven, and

like the sacred dust of the Patriarchs, reposing in the Land of Promise. They are the pledge—the vintage of the Golden Harvest. When from the four great points of the compass His elect children will come in streaming millions to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Heavenly Place—the abode of God—the glory of all lands—uncounted as the white-robed throng may be, and gathered from every age and from every clime, yet we shall have no feeling of isolation; we shall not feel ourself a stranger, and that we have come sudden and unexpected; our arrival will be known, for listen to the angelic announcement as it rolls symphonious over the Mount of God—They come! They come!

The Children of Israel knew but little of their promised possession, and there were no friends or kindred to welcome them when they had crossed the Jordan. But not so with the Blessed Land of which Canaan was only the type. There many of our loved connection await our coming. The greater part of some families have colonized a large tract in the Better Land. They have crossed over before us, and while we are in the wilderness, they rest from the journey. But we expect them to meet us on the margin of the dark river—to bend over us in love when we are faint and dying, and with the angel convoy, spread their snow-white pinions, and bear us, swift as the chariot of Elijah, home to God.

The settlement of the Tribes of Israel in the land of promise, types the final gathering of kindred, tongues and people. This is the numberless population of the redeemed; their crowns are laid up—the white mansioned homes are prepared. They are now done with pilgrimage and war; all tears shall be wiped away;

there shall be no more death, and the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OUTLOOK FROM THE

STORM-BEATEN PISGAH.

I pray Thee, let me go over and see the good land which is beyond Jordan ; that goodly mountain and Lebanon.—Deut. 3 : 25.

Whose head in wintry grandeur towers,
And whitens with eternal sleet ;
While summer, in a vale of flowers,
Is smiling rosy at his feet.

The Land of Canaan was noted for the fertility of its soil and the beauty of its natural scenery. There were mountains crowned with everlasting snow ; hills and valleys of the richest pasturage and the murmur of a thousand streams. It was emphatically a land flowing with milk and honey. God selected it from among the nations as the abode of His people, as His own earthly residence, and radiating center of heavenly truth. It was eligible, overlooking the peoples of earth, and close to the international thoroughfares, and where three great continents meet. Moses, in his prayer, refers to the goodly mountain and Lebanon—to Antilibinus and Lebanon proper, two great mountain chains running parallel with each other from the northeast to the southwest, and curving with the crescent shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

The five books of Moses, called the Pentateuch, give us the most rational and consistent account of the

creation of all things—the expulsion from the garden, the promise of the woman's conquering seed, and the history of Abraham and his descendants. These books inspired the poetry and mythology of the Old World, and form the grand introduction to a full revelation of the will of God. Here we have the Divine reason given for shortening the period of human life. The longevity of the Antediluvian races filled the earth with violence and crime ; so, then, to lessen and prevent the increase of wickedness, human life was reduced to three score years and ten.

Moses lived to be one hundred and twenty, passing by fifty years beyond the allotted time. His life was divided into three grand periods of forty years each. The first forty was spent in the Court of Pharaoh, surrounded by all the splendors of royalty. The second in the land of Midian, in the humble character of a shepherd. The last forty in a journey through the wilderness to the borders of the earthly Canaan. The first forty was but preparatory, learned in all the wisdom of Egypt which was then so renowned for her promotion of the Arts and Sciences. The second forty, which he spent in Midian, away from the fascinations of an earthly court, he had ample time for meditation and prayer. A Christian philosopher, engaged in a pastoral life, and roaming over its green hills and valleys, and gazing into the azure dome, jewelled with countless stars, the flame of devotion was often kindled, and his thoughts were led from nature up to nature's God. He was thus prepared for the grand part he was to act in the wonderful drama of the future.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, which may be regarded as the muster-roll of the Church, an inspired

Apostle refers to Moses: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years," etc., etc. His faith was not bounded by the narrow limits of the earthly Canaan, but reaching on, and beyond, in its broad and ample sweep, it took in the Everlasting home of his people, and the golden treasures laid up at God's right hand.

It is very probable that the father and mother of Moses had some Divine intimation of his future greatness—of the conspicuous part he was to act in the deliverance of the Children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. And they may have impressed the same thought upon his youthful mind, which grew and strengthened with his growth and strength, so that when he had come to years—when he was of sufficient age to understand the promises of God, and to comprehend the one great promise of the coming Messiah—he at once rejected all the proffered honors of Egypt, and cast in his lot with the people of God. He was the heir apparent to the crown of the Pharaohs, but his loss, in the wonderful triumphs of faith, was Eternal gain, and the splendid crown he sought still beams around his brow. Rejecting wealth and power, he became a king in Jeshurun; one of the most sublime and truthful historians—a leader—a prophet, endowed with an unusual measure of inspiration, and the grandest legislator that has ever lived, and one of the most striking and illustrious types of the Lord Jesus Christ. He could have been seated on a throne rendered illustrious by its patronage of Science and Art. He might have been buried in the tombs of the kings, beneath those huge piles of granite which have excited the wonder and admiration of the world, and stand like dials to count the long sluggish ages as they roll on to Judgment.

But he received a more honorable burial—buried by God Himself, and for Divine reasons which are not given, his grave was to be unknown. But angels guard the sacred place, and keep the vigil of ages. They come with the beams of the Orient, and when the starry hosts are marshalling along the plains of the sky—in the resurrection morning, from some lonely valley beyond the Jordan, a living form will be seen, of more dazzling brightness, than when he came down from the mount of communion with God.

Moses having united himself with the people of God, he continued with them. His was a lifelong devotion to God and His cause. This is old-fashioned Christianity. The religion of the Bible is not fitful and compromising. It is not a creature of circumstances; it is not merely emotional, but a living principle implanted in the heart—the leaven of the Holy Ghost, influencing the thoughts, words and actions, and shedding its influence broadcast upon the bosom of society and the world. Such characters are reliable. We always know where to find them—faithful sentinels at the post of duty, with armor on, ready for the conflict and shouting for the battle. We are not surprised that such should have peculiar trials, and are often called to pass through a furnace of affliction, but this is God's method of refining the pure gold.

A pirate will not attack a vessel upon the high seas if there is nothing to be gained by the capture. It is the richly-laden vessel around which these vultures of the ocean prowl. The Christian bark may be rudely driven; there may be days of darkness and nights without a star, but the Great Captain of his salvation stands at the helm; and loosed from his moorings and the cable

severed he will launch the deep freighted with grace and bound for Heaven. Moses was a man of earnest, continued and prevailing prayer. When the thousands of Israel were encamped around the base of Sinai, and had fallen into idolatry and crime, God was rising up to destroy them. Moses saw what was coming. He threw himself within the breach, he took hold by entreaty upon the uplifted arm of Jehovah and silenced the bristling thunders of His vengeance, and thus from time to time he averted the coming judgments of insulted Heaven. Humble, believing prayer moves the hand that built the world. Elijah was a man of like passion with ourselves, subject to the same frettings and repinings, to the alternations of fear and hope, and yet Elijah "locked up the clouds and carried off the key;" and after three years and six months he returned again, and on the height of Carmel kneeled down and prayed, till the heavens grew black with clouds and the rain came down in torrents upon all the burning land.

Paul and Silas shut up in the prison at Philippi. It was midnight, nothing was heard but the slow and measured tread of the sentinel and the lashing of the surge along the shore. They prayed and sung praises, and God in Heaven heard, and shook the earth, and shook the jail, and shook off their bands. There never has been yet a manacle forged that could fetter the soul. Prisons and the burning stake and the thousand inventions of human torture could never interrupt the communion between the soul and its God. It is the divinely appointed way of approach to the Mercy Seat, affecting more deeply our own hearts with a sense of our wants and dependence. The cry of poor blind Bartemeus stopped the Redeemer in His journey. A gentle inti-

mation of anxiety and distress from the two sisters brought Him from beyond the Jordan, to mingle His tears with the bereaved and to enquire for the grave of His friend.

Prayer is a trembling approach to the Mercy Seat—to touch the golden sceptre of pardon, an upward glancing of the eye to the Hills from whence help cometh. It climbs the ladder Jacob saw, and produces a rift in the darkest cloud. It wakes the song of angels and kindles the raptures of immortality, triumphing over the latest foe and solving the awful mystery of the dying hour. How remarkable is the fact, that Moses, who had so often prevailed for others, failed at the last when he prayed for himself. Prohibited from entering into the Land of Promise, he resorted to prayer, hoping that the Divine sentence would be revoked. But what was the answer of God: “Speak no more to me of this matter.” He had spoken unadvisedly with his lips at the waters of Meribah. The heart of Moses was saddened by a late bereavement. His beloved sister Miriam had just died, and the people came together, not to express their sympathy and condolence as they should have done, but to murmur and reproach him. In this frame of mind he smote the rock, and smote it oftener than he was commanded. He seemed to have some doubts whether the water would flow out the second time to such a rebellious people. His language indicates that he assumed too much power to himself, and thus failed to sanctify God before the people. They were prone to look at second causes, to ignore a present Divine agency, and the conduct of Moses on this occasion helped to strengthen them in their unbelief; and God must show His public disapproval by prohibiting His lifelong ser-

vant from entering into the Land of Promise. But as a gracious extenuation of the hard sentence, he was permitted to stand on the top of Pisgah, and in the clear sunlight of an Asiatic sky to look upon the land which had been promised so long, and to which he had been journeying for forty years. He saw the valley of the Jordan, the groves of orange and of the palm. He ranged up the wooded heights of Lebanon, crowned with evergreen cedars, and far away along the shores of the Mediterranean, spread out before him, were the inheritances of the different tribes—Judah, with his abundance of wine and cattle; Asher, with his fields of golden grain, and Zebulon at the haven of the sea, with his ships of commerce.

This last look of the hills helped to reconcile him to his fate, and calmly, without a sigh of regret, he lay down to die. No shadow passed over him, not a muscle moved as he looked death full in the face, calm as the bosom of the ocean when the tempest sleeps, softly as the expiring notes of *Æolian*, like the gentle close of a Sabbath day when the setting sun paints with gold the clouds of evening. Thus Moses peacefully closed his eyes on the beauties here, to open them in glad bewilderment upon the glory of all lands.

Enoch was translated before the flood. And Elijah, seated in his triumphant chariot, felt no pang of death, but was conscious of the life eternal before he bade the world adieu. Moses, like Daniel, was commanded to die. The decree is irrevocable: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The reign of death is universal. His dark empire travels with the sun, and widens with the exodus of earth's wandering tribes. Go where you may, freeze around the Pole, or burn

beneath the tropics, climb up the Alpine steeps, or wander over the rose-covered vales of Cashmere, everywhere, the living know that they must die. Poor humanity, with all its hopes and fears, and all life's tender and endeared relations; unfeeling death deranges our plans, snaps asunder the most sacred ties and buries our brightest jewels out of sight. Sacred story is silent beyond the bare mention of the fact in reference to the translation of Enoch. We know not what were his views and feelings during the last hour he lingered on mortal shores.

Elijah conversed with his successor in the prophetic office up to the very time when the chariot of fire swept down with the speed of light. Moses was calm in his dying address. And though he could not cross over Jordan, he saw the Land of Promise from a distance, and by faith looked for the vernal plains and sunbright home of all the people of God.

There are frequent allusions in the Bible to the views and feelings of the Christian in the dying hour. Voltaire, the famous infidel, in some of his confidential letters, said: "I hate life and dread death." How different was Paul. Writing to some of his brethren, he says: "I long to depart and be with Christ; but to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." Paul is willing to resign Heaven itself for a time in order to do good. What a noble example of self-denial and humble acquiescence to the Divine will. In chains, perhaps, when he wrote, the block of Nero and the severing axe, like the chariot of Elijah, would have borne him at once into the presence of his Lord,

and helped to swell the number of the holy army of martyrs.

Self-denial is the first lesson of Christianity. This was the spirit of Christ, who was rich, but for our sakes became poor, and the glorified ones who have gotten the victory and gather beneath the shadow of the Throne would all be ready, were it the will of God, to lay down harp and palm and come back to the world and labor for our good. Paul was conscious of his usefulness, but still he knew where was the hiding of power, and who gave inspiration to his words and spread abroad the bloodless triumphs of the Cross. The mother may be of an humble and Christian mind, and yet feel how important her own life is to the tender babe nestling upon her bosom. A minister may be willing to exchange the Cross for the Crown, and leave the field of conflict and enter into rest, but still he should be reconciled to life while so many hang upon his lips whom he may be instrumental in saving, comforting the troubled in heart and leading the Redeemer's flock into green pastures and beside the still waters.

To be prepared for both worlds is the grand attainment of the Christian life—ready to die, but willing to live as long as there is anything for him to do or to suffer. And our same Apostle, writing to the Church at Corinth, says: "Willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." He here expresses a preference to depart. And though this is the privilege of all who live consistent and devoted, yet it was a very common experience among the early Christians; and hence their holy longings, looking for the blessed hope, loving His appearing and hastening unto the coming of the day of the day of God, and crying out

in the language of holy triumph: "Amen! even so come Lord Jesus." This is Christianity in earnest, rising above the fears of death, standing on the top of Pisgah and gazing raptuously on fields dressed in living green. Such characters are witnesses of the truth—living epistles known and read of all men. They are not shocked by approaching age and by increasing infirmities. They love the communion of saints, the fellowship of kindred minds, of hopes and fears, and talk together of going home.

It is natural to shrink back from death, all its accompaniments make our timid nature's shudder, the winding sheet, the shroud, the coffin and the tomb. But all things are possible to him that believeth, grace triumph's, and the jubilant strains mingle with the swellings of Jordan:

"O death, where is thy sting!
O grave, where is thy victory!"

All Christians have cause enough, if they knew it, to make them long to be gone. They will then exchange faith for sight, and hope for glad fruition. No longer strangers and pilgrims, they will be at home in the better country, in their Fatherland. Many of the children of God are more concerned about the manner of their death than the effect. They seem not to be so much afraid of death as dying—the parting scene, the tears of those we love; and there are the pains, the groans, the dying strife, and the consignment of the body to the grave to be food for worms. But still they long for the consequences. It is unspeakable, everlasting gain. Absent from the body, they are present with the Lord. All tears shall be wiped away, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying—exchanging the

sorrows of earth for the joys of Immortality. It is a repose lasting as Heaven, when the burden and heat of the day have ended ; the shout of the victor, when the last battle has been gained ; and the Christian mariner, tossed and driven on life's troubled sea, enters full sail the stormless port and anchors high among the hills of God.

The real Christian often longs to be gone, to go where his treasures are, and to receive his crown ; but his pathway lies through the valley of the shadow of death, and there is bold Jordan's stormy main. He resembles the man whose family is abroad. He longs to see and hail his loved ones again, but there is the stormy sea and the sea-sickness—

“So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.”

Every child of God dies safely. Some may not be as peaceful and happy as others, some may have a rougher passage ; but some, like the Israelites, will pass through dry shod, while others, like Bunyan's pilgrim, will sink at first in the deep waters, but by and by they will feel the bottom—see the shining ones as they come and the wide opening gates of pearl. The passage will be safe and short, and the issue an abundant entrance into the joy of their Lord. The Christian, like the great Apostle, desires to finish his course with joy—joy to others, and joy to himself. When we have seen our loved connections suffering, and all hope of recovery was gone, and the dying one begs us to cease our prayers, to detain him no longer, and give him up to God, by and by faith triumphs. We rise above our tears, the troubled heart submits. Our loss will be his eternal gain. Warfare, and tired and dusty travel, all behind, and forever

freed from sorrow, temptation and sin. The dying one may address us in the language of the Redeemer to His sorrowing disciples: "If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father." But above all things he desires to finish his course with joy to himself. Sometimes he is harrassed with doubts, and depressed with fears. The enemy of souls is busy, knowing that his time is short; but God will, most generally, illustrate the power of Christianity in its triumph over death. Even a Balaam could say: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

They shout aloud upon their beds! They come with singing unto Zion, and the dying chamber is none other than the house of God and the gate of Heaven. We know when and where we begun life—the year, the month, the day; and memory loves to linger around the old homestead. But angel of my birth, guardian spirit who watched over my cradled slumbers, where will it end! Among careless strangers or sobbing friends, at home or abroad, on land or sea, by the roadside, or in the deep shadow of the forest trees, will the dying head be pillowed upon the cold lap of Earth and moaning winds be our only requiem. But wherever it may be, it will be safe and happy if we fall asleep in Jesus.

Moses died on the top of Pisgah, the loftiest height of the Nebo range of mountains. His eye was not dim nor his natural force abated. His brother Aaron and his sister Miriam had just preceded him. Aaron, like Moses, went up to the top of a mountain to die; but there were tearful friends about him, and loving hands laid him gently away in his mountain grave. But Moses went alone. No earthly friend ministered to him

in the last hour. He was alone with God and with the angels. And we imagine that the pains of death were softened. There were no convulsive agonies, no fainting pangs, no weary wasting of the frame away; but in the tender language of Scripture, he fell on sleep, nearer up to the heavens when he died than the chariot of Elijah flaming along the valley of the Jordan. As sunlight drinks the dew, so his spirit with a bound mingled at once with the thrilling wonders of God's eternal home. Though the circumstances of his death and burial are mysterious, yet God had reasons for it. He knew the proneness of the people to idolatry, that they would have deified him and sacrificed at his grave. And hence the sacred historian tell us that he buried him in a valley, in the Land of Moab, over against Beth-Peor, and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

St. Jude refers to a controversy about the body of Moses between the old adversary of God and goodness and Michael, the Archangel. When and where this controversy took place we are not informed. We may imagine that, as Moses died on the top of Pisgah, angels were his pallbearers; and that as they bore his body to some lonely sequestered valley, Satan met them and contended for it, for the purpose of idolatrous worship. We know not what arguments he used, or what insinuations he may have made. He may have insinuated that they were acting more like his murderers than his friends, and referred them to the everlasting Pyramids of Egypt as the burial place of kings; to the cave and shady grounds of Machpelah, where Abraham and his beloved Sarah were sleeping;—"And now is this the way you bury the first King of Israel? A leader and

lawgiver, a prophet, too, who was on such familiar terms with Deity, and who stood up amid the flame and thunder of Sinai of old." Michael, the leader of the funeral train, not daring to use any railing language, only said, "The Lord rebuke thee;" and God interposed and the train moved on in silence. No death-bell tolled from some stormy height. There was no military band with muffled drum and arms reversed, no sound echoing from crag to crag, like the firing of a minute gun at sea. But noiselessly as the daylight, as beams of Orient purpling the East, whether in the day or in the night time, he was buried unseen. No sound was heard when his grave was dug. The funeral rites were few and simple—no elegiac strain was sung, no funeral sermon was preached. He had not lived for himself, nor for one age, but far as the records of Divine Truth shall fly, his memorial shall be read. Children yet unborn will read the inspired story with delight. The heart will warm over the weeping babe in the little ark, and thought will trace his wondrous history—the lonely death scene on the mountain and his unknown grave. He was the only saint God ever buried, and He reared no rude stone or monumental slab, no marble cenotaph pointing towards the heavens, to mark his grave or symbolize his ascended spirit.

Caravans laden with the rich merchandise of the East may have long since ground to powder the sods which angels upturned; roving bands kindle their campfires around, and the wild Arab of the desert may spur his foaming steed over the undistinguished grave, but the lonely burial spot is forever green in the memory of God, and he sleeps on dreamless in hope of a glorious resurrection. We know not how long his body

lay on the mountain top; angels were the watchers beneath the starry skies and humming some melody of Heaven, responsive to the music of the spheres.

Joseph was embalmed and put in a coffin in Egypt, and sacredly preserved for two hundred and fifty years; and on the night of the departure of the Children of Israel, they carried the bones of Joseph with them, thus forming a grand funeral procession which continued for forty years. Men of science and learning—orators, statesmen and divines, often lie in state, for friends and admirers to look for the last time upon the face of the honored dead. Some of you who read these lines will be permitted to die at home, amid the tears of those that love you; wife and children, like ministering angels, will gather about the bed of death to perform the last kind offices of love; they will smooth the dying pillow, give the cooling drink, and wipe from the pale brow the cold and raining dews. Kind friends will come to sympathize and watch beside the couch of suffering. They will quote the promises of His word—open this alabaster box of precious perfume, and sing and pray, and help you in triumph home to God. And you may be permitted to linger while the chariot of ministering angels is getting ready; to comfort the sorrowing ones you are leaving behind, to exhort them to live for God and meet you in Heaven; you can tell them of the joys you feel, of your visions of glory, that the sting of death is gone and the grave has lost its terrors, and exultingly exclaim,

“I almost see the shining ranks
Of friends and kindred dear;
I brush the dews on Jordan’s banks,
The crossing must be near.”

And when you are dead and gone, loving friends will lay you away in the grave, and like Martha and Mary, will often go there to weep, and try to hold a mysterious communion with your sainted spirit.

Though the death and burial of Moses were involved in so much mystery, yet he appears again upon the earth in the land he so much desired to see. "Over Jordan at last, in Canaan at last," and mingles in all the wonders of the transfiguration scene. So our sainted dead may often come as ministering angels to us while we are in this vale of tears. If we have come to Mount Zion, to the Church of the First-born, to angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, we are assured that our sainted kindred are among them; they are not lost, but only gone before. They think of us and love us still; we sometimes feel their dreamy presence. Their image flits before the mind, and the heart mellows with the hope of seeing them again, where death and parting are unknown. You may die on the mountain top, in the dark valley, or on some lone sea girt isle; the green waves of the stormy sea may be your winding sheet, and some unfathomed depth your tomb; or you may sleep among kindred in the old churchyard; but if you die as the Christian dies all will be well. "Life, death, things present and things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ's is God's." What is there here to keep us back, to lure us off, while we are on our way to see our God—to see the King in His beauty, to hear the voice of the bridegroom, and angels harping with their harps. I would love to hear the victorious shout of the proto-martyr Abel; to see the snow-white cloud that bore Enoch away before the flood; to hear Noah tell how he sailed out of the old world into the new, and

on to Heaven ; to hear Moses tell, in sublimer strains than the song of his triumph on the shores of the Red Sea, of his last look of the hills and his first visions of the Better Land. I would love to recline this often aching head on Abraham's bosom, and listen to the mellow strains of David's harp of gold ; to hear from Isaiah's burning lips the grand Evangelism of the seven-fold spirit ; to hear the once tranced but now glorified Apostle speak of the things unutterable, and with his radiant finger trace the lines of the redeeming story, and point to the unfolding glories of Eternal Heaven ; to see the twelve apostles and the twelve white thrones, the snowy robes, the crowns of gold and branching palms of all the martyred hosts of God ; to meet again with my old companions of the weeping pilgrimage, with whom I have wept and smiled ; on the banks of the river, or beneath the shadow of the throne, gather about me again the wife of my youth and all the children of our mutual love—not one of them is lost—not a jewel from my crown—not a lamb from my earthly fold. Death is swallowed up of victory, every heart is jubilant, and every tongue sings Harvest Home.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GLORY OF THE LATTER TEMPLE.

The glory of this latter house, shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts.—Haggai, 2 : 9.

O ! that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall !
We'll join the Everlasting Song,
And crown him Lord of All.

The Tabernacle in the wilderness was a miniature resemblance of the future Temple of God upon Mount Zion. It was built after a Divine model—according to the pattern shown Moses in the mount. The Tabernacle and the Temple, like the double prophecies of the Old Testament, were types of the Church of God, existing through the ages, and of that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Everything about them was grand, imposing and wonderfully significant. Consecrated to devotion, here was the altar of sacrifice, the blood of atonement and the cloud of the Divine glory. The sacred fire kindled from Heaven never went out for ages. The Sanctum Sanctorum, or Holy of Holies, was veiled to the view of the multitude. Into this the High Priest only entered, and that but once a year, on the great day of national expiation. It symbolized the way

of approach to the mercy seat, the atonement of the Redeemer's blood, the inflexible demands of His justice, and dimly shadowed forth the Heaven of our hopes. Within the veil were seen the types of heavenly things. Here God recorded his name; the tribes of Israel thronged its sacred courts; streams of sacrificial blood flowed, and pious spirits looked and longed for the coming Redemption.

King David had resolved in his heart to build the Temple, but a prophet was sent to him with the Divine reason that he could not—that he had been a man of war, had shed blood upon the earth, and God could not permit him to build the house. His peaceful son, Solomon, was to have this distinguished honor, to build an earthly Palace for God. He was a type of the great Master Builder, whose wondrous fabric has been rising to completion through all the ages; and when the mystic building stands complete the capstone shall be brought, amid the glad acclaim of rejoicing millions.

David had made great preparations for the building; he had prepared an abundance of material and left thousands of gold and silver for its rich and costly adornment. And, what is more remarkable still, during some hour of ecstasy, when tranced and oblivious to earthly surroundings, the whole plan of the building was sketched out before him by the Divine hand. It was a panoramic display of the future Temple, like the Apocalypse of the New Jerusalem!

God was the Divine Architect. He drew the plan of the wonderful structure. It was a model for Grecian architecture in its palmy days. No elaborate workmanship, no Doric or Corinthian column, no chiseled Mosaic, have ever excelled the beauty of style, the wonder of

design, as seen in the Divine model. Human genius has accomplished much. Some of its monuments still stand, eloquent, by their silence and grandeur, of busy populations and buried centuries. But God is the author of all that is beautiful in nature or wonderful in art. His divine agency is not to be ignored, either in the discoveries of science or the palatial buildings on which thousands have gazed with admiration.

Bezaleel was called by name and appointed to superintend the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. He was endowed with peculiar wisdom by God himself. Speaking after the manner of men, his genius was universal. He not only erected the Tabernacle, but he devised all that was ornamental, till, like a jeweled crown of royalty, this earthly tent of God was borne amid the wilds of the desert.

Hiram, the widow's son, was brought from Tyre as an artificer of the beautiful designs of Solomon's Temple. He built those emblematical pillars in the porch of the sacred edifice, and executed those designs which may have referred to the mystic lore of ages and darkly adumbrated the grand Evangel of Christianity

There is one thought connected with the building of the Temple which no doubt has escaped the notice of many Bible readers, and that is, the vision of David as to its architectural arrangements: "All this the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern."

This was the finest model ever presented. To it Greece owes the splendor of her temples and theaters and the immortality of her fame. The great discoveries which have been frequently termed accidental, they were simply providential—God was in it. His unseen hand di-

rected the agencies, His spirit inspired the genius and developed the wonderful discovery. And how great have been the results in civilization and in the spread of Christianity ! The invention of the mariner's compass led to the discovery of a new world, opening up exhaustless mines of wealth. And here, too, is the birth-place of freedom and the asylum for the oppressed of all lands, while a pure and heaven-born Christianity spreads its broad ægis over all. The telescope discloses to us more fully the Infinitude of the Divine Power, those watch-fires that flame upon the brow of night or sweep over the unmeasured fields of the sky but widen the range of our thoughts and excite our wonder and admiration. It has penetrated beyond our solar system, and discovered an immensity of space all gemmed with stars and bright with suns. Here worlds move in soft and sisterly harmony—no cloud gathers, no desolating storm ever rages. There are no alternations of day and night, but an Eternal Sunshine spreads over the whole.

But this is not the Heaven of the Christian, nor the place where God and angels dwell. It may be regarded as the outer court of the Temple not made by hands—the suburbs of that city whose builder and maker is God; the avenues of light stretching on and up to a city which eye hath not seen nor ear heard the melody of its songs.

How wonderful have been the discoveries of astronomical science! The glassy eye of the telescope has gazed on worlds the Psalmist never saw, and, like an argosy of light, has opened to our wondering view the richest displays of His wisdom and power.

Improvements still increase with the ages. The world is frequently startled by great discoveries. Sir Isaac

Newton, the brilliant star of the Seventeenth century, it was thought, had brought astronomy to perfection, but after a time the name of Ben. Franklin "was interlocked with the lightning's wing, and heard in the thunder's far off roll." God is secretly moving the thousand agencies of the universe; they are not left to chance or accident; they accomplish through accumulating centuries His grand designs. Christ said just before his ascension, "All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth." All things are laid under contribution. The burning seraph; the countless throng of angel harpers; the Church of the First-born; the Church militant redeemed by His blood; the rise and fall of kingdoms; the discoveries of science; the spiritual warfare, and the peaceful death of the most humble saint of God. All these influences are at work to accomplish the grand climax of the Mediatorial reign of Christ. God is working out the regeneration of a lost world, and bringing back our alienated race into allegiance with Himself. These are the indices of the Mellennial reign of Christ, and the last triumph of His cross.

The Temple was built on Mount Moriah, where Abraham virtually offered up Isaac. He was directed to offer him on one of the mountains He would tell him of. On the third day he saw the mountain in the distance. How he knew it we are not informed; whether by an audible voice, an impression on the mind, or by a cloud hanging over the designated spot. The whole scene was illustrative of the Patriarch's faith in God, and typed most clearly the future Redeemer; His death on the cross, and His resurrection from the grave.

For the sin of numbering the Children of Israel an

angel walked from Dan to Beersheba, and seventy thousand sealed his angry commission. He then stood on this same mountain top and stretched out his sword over Jerusalem. David saw him and was awe-struck at the sight. He was clothed in all the attributes of terror, his sword was like pointed flame, and vengeance was in the lightning glance of his eye. Ornan and his four sons saw him and hid themselves. David was directed to buy the place and build an altar, and when he laid on the bleeding victim fire fell from Heaven and consumed the sacrifice. His offering was accepted. The plague was stayed, the destroying angel sheathed his sword and flew back to Heaven. Here was the site of the future temple, dedicated to His worship, and the jeweled type of the Church of God.

Here flowed an almost continuous stream of sacrificial blood, jointing to the one great offering for sin, when the Lamb of God poured out His sinless soul upon the Roman cross. The building of the temple was the work of years, and many thousands were engaged. There were artisans and laborers who were not of the Jewish nation, and the timbers were hewed and the stones quarried and prepared in the mountains, so that the sublime structure went up without so much noise or the Babel confusion of varied dialects. And when completed it presented an architectural splendor which was unparalleled. It was the pride and glory of the Jewish people, and could be seen for a long distance, reflecting in the sunlight and shining like a gem of Orient. The Queen of Sheba, who was so familiar with palaces and temples, was astonished at the display of royal magnificence and the crowding splendors of the house of God. When the temple was completed the priest carried the

ark into the holy place. The cloud of the Divine Presence and glory filled all its courts. It was a visible symbol that He had accepted the house, and had come to take up His abode with His people.

A cloud directed the wanderings of the Children of Israel for forty years in the wilderness. A cloud descended upon the Tabernacle when it was set up. The same visible glory now descends and sweeps like a flood through every court. The priests are borne back beyond the sacred precincts by the rushing columns. The King spreads his hands toward Heaven and offered a sublime dedicatory prayer. It was full of penitence and humility, and embraced a wide range of subjects, and God promised to answer the whole. The Temple stood for ages. It was consecrated to devotion. Here the nation assembled to worship. It was an illustrious type of the Church and of the many mansioned home of His people. The gold with which it was built and garnished was brought from the far off Land of Ophir. It took three years to accomplish the long and perilous voyage. The Ophir of olden times is supposed to be the California of the present day.

As the Temple was a type of the Church and was beautified with the gold of Ophir, may we not suppose that from California's exhaustless mines we may draw the resources that is to send the Gospel to the islands of the Pacific and far distant lands of heathen darkness and gloom, helping to spread abroad the savor of the Redeemer's name till a nation shall be born in a day; and the great Spiritual Temple stands complete, and the capstone shall be brought with shoutings of grace unto it. The apostacy of the Jewish nation led to the invasion of their country and the destruction of their city

and Temple; they were carried captives to a distant land. On the willows by the streams of Babylon they hung their harps and refused to sing the songs of Zion.

With the orgies of a hoary superstition, how strangely discordant would have been the Lord's song—far away from the Temple and its burning altar, and the happy worshipping throng, their hearts were too sad to sing. Their thoughts were lingering around the holy hill of Zion, and instead of song there were wild expressions of grief in unison with the sighing breeze, the murmur of waters, or the wolf's long howl echoing through the valley, lonely and dark and deep. They wept when they remembered Zion, the ruin of their Temple and their desolated homes. When the royal decree was made for their return and to rebuild the Temple, we were, says the inspired Psalmist, like them that dream, as Jacob, fainting at the tidings that his beloved Joseph was still alive, it seemed too good to be true. It was like the trumpet blast proclaiming the year of Jubilee. But when they began to rebuild the house of God the old men wept. They had seen the Temple of Solomon standing there in all its glory. Its courts once vocal with prayer and praise, but now hushed. All was silent, and its glory mingling with the dust. The young men rejoiced to see the new Temple beginning to rise phoenix like from the ashes of the old.

The new Temple was inferior to the first. There was no ark of the Covenant, no cloud of the Divine glory, no Urim and Thummim. The sacred fire kindled from Heaven upon its altar had long since ceased to burn. But they were assured that the glory of the latter Temple should be greater than that of the former, from the fact that it should be honored with the pres-

ence of the Son of God ; that He should walk its hallowed courts ; that within its sacred walls His voice should be heard, and accents of mercy and hope fall upon the ears of the listening multitudes. To Zerubbabal, as a type of the Divine Architect, was committed the charge of building the Temple ; but to Christ was committed the charge of the rearing of a nobler building, which will take longer in the rearing and greater triumph at the completion.

Christ is the Great Master Builder who is to build the Temple of the Lord and bear the glory. The plan was devised in Eternity, arranged in the silent councils of the Godhead before time began. It was not syllabled in the music of the spheres, nor sung by the morning stars. It dates further back. They sung the wonders of creative power, but a Godhead in council gave birth to the great redeeming plan. The Second Person in the ever-blessed Trinity was to become incarnate, and by His death upon the Cross was to lay the foundation of His Church, against which the gates of hell should never prevail. Christ is the foundation. He is the cornerstone that connects and supports the building. "Behold," says the Prophet, "I lay in Sion a Chief Cornerstone, elect, precious, and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be confounded." He supports the building rising to completion through the ages—the great mystical mansion, exciting the wonder of the Universe and developing even to angelic minds the manifold wisdom of God. The Church was built on Christ, on His mysterious person, on His meditorial character, on His work and obedience unto death. It was not built on Peter, a frail and erring mortal, sinking at one time beneath the waves, at another denying his Master with

oaths and cursing, following Him afar off and walking away wondering from the tomb of his Redeemer. Nothing short of Omnipotence could bear up the wonderful structure. Christ is the Captain of our salvation. He leads the sacramental host from conquering to conquer. He only has been victorious over principalities and powers. He chained all conquering death to His triumphal chariot, and drew Him along the pathway of cloud. The golden gates of Heaven stood ajar to receive Him fresh from the field of conflict, and the Herald Angel shouted: "He comes! He comes!"

He is not only the Foundation, but the Builder—the Divine Architect. He drew the plan and selects the material. He uses instrumentalities in carrying on the work. From Nature's rugged quarry the living stones are hewed and polished for the sacred edifice. He had the range of the Universe, but He selected our world as the site for the Building. Here was unfolded the wonders of Redemption. He did not choose to build His Church in Heaven, where the standard of revolt was raised, where rebellion first arose; nor to construct it amid the ransomed spirits selected from among them. For them no provision has been made, no atoning sacrifice offered.

Christ did not assume the nature of angels. Those fallen spirits are forever exiled from hope, bound with chains in the rayless night of everlasting despair. But He took upon Himself our nature. He was of the seed of Abraham, and united the Divine and human in His own person, and on the bleeding height of Calvary laid the broad foundation of His Church. Here the hopes of millions cluster, and all the sympathies of immortality. The visible Universe displays the wonders of

Almighty power. We can trace His wisdom in earth and sky, and feel how insignificant is our world. That it is but a speck in the vast wilderness of suns and systems, and yet here was the birthplace of God's only Son. Here He lived, suffered and died, and trooping angels sweep down the starry plains, across the comet's burning track, and gather about the Cross and bend in wonder over the fountain filled with blood, for by the Church is made known the manifold wisdom of God, which things the angels desire to look into.

Christ drew the plan of the Church. He conceived the grand idea. He settled the magnificent outline. Its grand proportions were in His mind before the material universe arose out of Chaos, or the jubilant sons of God sung the morning hymn of Creation. The plan of the building is older than the world. It was born in the Godheart before the angels. This was the hidden mystery which the incarnate Redeemer would reveal. And how ready He was to respond to the Father's wish, when He answered: "Lo I come in the volume of the Book as it is written of me to do Thy will, O God." And He never lost sight of the one object, of the one design of His mission. "I have," said He to His disciples, "a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" referring to the mysterious and bloody scenes of the Garden and the Cross.

His Church was not to be established by the sword. The march of the Prince of Peace would not be marked by scenes of carnage, by smoking ruins, desolated cities, and the wails of the widow and the orphan. The burden of the angelic song on the night of His birth was "Peace on earth and good will to men." The weapons

of the spiritual warfare are not carnal. The victories are bloodless. The Pentecostal spirit is one of peace—peace with God, for our sins are forgiven, and there are no dread forebodings of death and judgment. The Gospel is a proclamation of peace. It tells us of reconciliation by the blood of the Cross, and is the grand instrumentality that will rear and complete the great spiritual building. In the Gospel provision is made for all. It ignores all worldly distinction and comes freighted with blessings and life evermore for the poor and friendless. God will live in the most humble cottage, and angels will come at His command, light their camp fires and pitch their tents around. It offers pardon without money or price.

It is Heaven's own merciful arrangement. They may come from the rural walks of life, from the streets and lanes of the city, from regions distant and obscure, as doves flocking to the windows. The most humble saint will shine as a polished stone in the sacred Temple. God looks only to him who is of a contrite heart. Gold and silver cannot buy the Pearl of great price. Not all the wealth of the Indies could purchase the pardon of one soul. Her coral strands and Afric's sunny fountains rolling beneath her burning skies are all dim and worthless in the light of the Cross.

The Evangelical Prophet represents the Gospel in its effects as digging down the mountains and exalting the valleys, thus bringing all upon a level. Here, like the grave, the rich and the poor meet together. They kneel upon the same platform, shed their penitential tears and address in the same way the Throne of Grace. Though the King may dip down into the well of life with his golden goblet, and the beggar with his gourd, the water

is the same to both. It is a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life.

After all that may be said of earthly distinctions, of thrones and diadems, our hope of Heaven in the end is to recline with a beggar upon Abraham's bosom. Christ selects the material to build up His Church, and these are ransomed sinners—redeemed men, immortal spirits, living stones hewn from the quarry of a common and desperate depravity, renewed and sanctified by the Spirit, and polished for the sacred building. His precious blood was shed for the chief of sinners. He is the Physician and the balm of Gilead. Redemption is His work alone. There is salvation in no other. Human merit will not avail. Our only plea is His atoning death. And when the spiritual Temple is complete, and the headstone is brought, rejoicing millions will shout: "Grace, grace unto it!"

Christ employs the workmen and pays them their wages. He gave them their high commission—broad as the world and enduring as Time. It was His last interview with His disciples. He was standing upon the Mount of Olives. Before Him was spread out the city of Jerusalem, with its minarets and towers, Mount Calvary flashing in the sunlight, and the deserted tomb in the garden; and He saw on the distant sky the cloud of vengeance gathering. He was about to ascend with captivity captive, and to throw wide open the gates of the Heavenly City. He spoke of His omnipotence, His power in Heaven and Earth. He thus sent them forth shielded by a power which nothing could withstand. The hoary superstitions of ages would give way, dumb idols would tremble upon their thrones. The

nations would stand in awe, or be entranced with the advancing triumphs of His kingdom.

From Jerusalem, in the language of the Prophet, the living waters would go forth, half toward the former sea and half toward the hinder sea, and happy millions would fall on salvation's side of the river of God. Through the heat of summer and the cold of winter the bright waters would roll on towards the Orient and towards the setting sun, till the confluent streams shall meet on the bottom of the globe and deluge the world. He assured them of His presence, that should go with them and with their successors in office down to the latest time, till the trump of the Archangel would summon the saint from his knees and the watchman from the walls of Zion.

How glorious were the results at the beginning! Three thousand were converted under one sermon. Persecution drove them from place to place, but the heavenly flame only widened. The blood-red banner of the Cross shall never trail in dust. Many, like old Eli, may tremble for the Ark of God, but the gates of hell shall never prevail. The Church founded on Jesus Christ shall survive the ruin of all the ages and the shock of final judgment. Every workman who has labored on the building shall receive his wages. He shall have souls for his hire—seals to his ministry. This shall be their recompense in this life—the bounty money, the grapes of Eschol, the vintage of the golden harvest time; and by and by, in the presence of assembled worlds, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. No laborer employed upon the sacred edifice shall lose his reward.

The Redeemer, when He went away, gave to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. God will not forget your work and labor of love. You may have went forth weeping, bearing precious seed, but when the Angel Reaper shall come, seated on his chariot of cloud, to reap down the golden grain, you shall gather up your sheaves and with the soul-inspiring melody of Harvest Home, shall see them safely garnered in heavenly barns. Ministers, aged and worn out in your Redeemer's cause, your course is nearly run. The glorious strife is ending. You have fought the good fight, and, like an old war horse at the sound of battle, you often feel the kindling fires of your youthful days. But you no longer go in front, you are not seen at the head of the column leading on the conquering host to victory, but your work is with your God. Laid up in Heaven are the voluminous volumes of your sermons, your stereotyped books of prayer. All your tears are bottled, and you will share with Paul the victories of your triumphant Lord. And down to the most humble saint, who helped to fell the cedars of Lebanon and dig the rocks from the quarry, and who has borne the burden and heat of the day, your names are in the Book of Life. You are among His hidden ones.

Earthly glory will soon pass away, proud names will be forgotten, and fame will no more tell the story of their deeds, but you shall be held in everlasting remembrance. God knows where you live. To Him your humble cottage is a palace fit for the King of Kings. The many bottles of your tears are stored away in Heaven. His angel has recorded your many visits to the sick, and the number of times you helped the poor

and needy. Like Christ sitting by the treasury, God knows how much you have given to His cause, and how you have labored to spread abroad the savor of the Redeemer's name. These are golden treasures laid up at God's right hand

Christ is not only the Architect and Builder, but He is the Proprietor of His Church. He calls it His—"On this Rock I will build my Church." All are ransomed by His blood, regenerated and sanctified by His spirit, polished and placed like the jewels of a crown in the great Spiritual Building. Some are conspicuous and some obscure, some are near and some remote. It is all arranged by the wise Master Builder, thus fitly framed together and growing unto a holy Temple in the Lord.

For near six thousand years the work has been going on. Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles have all labored on the building. Millions of hands have been employed and the work is not yet finished. Through accumulating centuries, in glory and grandeur, it will rise to completion. Solomon's Temple was burned by the Chaldeans, and Zerubbabel's by the Romans. The Pyramids of Egypt still stand, and will probably reach the last day, but then they will go down with the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds. But here is a sublime structure, unaffected by the ruins of time, and which will only shine with greater effulgence when the sun is blown out and universal nature is dissolved. God's workmen may die, but the work will still go on. The stone of prophetic vision shall in its swelling amplitude fill the world. The grain of mustard will grow into a tree whose broad and ample shade will shelter the nations. The waters of the sanctuary shall widen,

deepen, and finally sweep on without a shore. The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the top of the mountains. All nations shall flow unto it, and the capstone shall be brought amid the rejoicings of glad, exclaiming millions.

How wonderful is this mystical building! How grand its proportions! Nature is beautiful with all her worlds of light. God has lavished His beauties upon earth and sky. But Redemption is His greatest work. It is the crowning glory. Angels fly over unmeasured fields and sweep the glittering dewdrops from the stars, to sing His birth song, to watch the triumphs of the Cross and trace the ascending Star of Bethlehem. And now when the capstone is brought, and the Palatial House of God leans like a gem of Orient against the sky, they will come in trooping millions and join in the jubilant strains of a world redeemed.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WONDROUS

MINISTRY OF THE REDEEMER.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach.—Luke 4: 18.

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow;
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o'erflow.

Christ was the most wonderful personage that ever appeared upon the earth. His brief ministry was the grandest episode of all the long centuries of time. Never were the sympathies of immortality so enlisted, or the heart of humanity made to thrill with a hope that caught its inspiration from a cross, and from the glory of a world beyond. No character in history, sacred or profane, can be compared to Him. Statesmen holding the balance of power, heroes marching through streams of blood and smoking ruins to victory, poets charming the nations with melody of verse and song, orators, whose burning words all aflame sweep over the passions and sway the multitudes; but all are dwarfed by the matchless power of Him that spake as no man never spake. The people wondered at the gracious words which fell from His lips. The storm cowered before Him. He smoothed the foam-crested billows of the

raging deep. Devils hurried to their homes among the damned, while death and the grave yielded up their captives, and the great heart of humanity bounded forward to mingle in the glories of the resurrection morning. He is without a parallel. He is beyond all conception. None to be compared with Him among the imperishable records of the olden worthies—a prophet greater than Moses, a captain superior to Joshua, and leading the Israel of God to brighter lands of promise. More patient than Job, wiser than Solomon, a King of more royal magnificence than David, stronger than Samson, and with more inspiration than the immortal group of Prophets.

His mysterious union of the two natures has never yet been explained. It is the problem of all ages, and, perhaps, of all eternity. To angels proverbial for knowledge, and to men inspired by the Holy Ghost, it is still the great mystery of godliness. Its gradual unfolding may form much of the bewildering joy of saints and angels through all the uncounted years of Heaven.

When on earth He appeared as a man, with all the attributes of humanity, He mingled with the people, and sanctified by His example the social relation and private friendships. He suffered hunger and thirst, weariness and fatigue; and, like a tired and dusty traveler, He sat down upon the Well of Samaria and asked for water. At times He wept. He was the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. His Godhead was veiled. Had He appeared in His true character, as He did on the Mount of Transfiguration, along the streets of Jerusalem, or among the towns and cities of Galilee, it would have defeated the great object of His

mission to the world. For the people would have been awe-struck and fell as dead men before Him. In His personal appearance, according to the Prophet, there was nothing comely that we should desire Him. But there was somewhere the hiding of power—a wonderful attraction. The multitudes hung entranced, and wondered at the gracious words which fell from His lips. Devils fled at His approach, and for disease in all its multiplied forms, He was the physician and balm of Gilead. Winds and waves, earth, air and ocean were subject to His word, while disease and death relented at His command.

His life was a busy one. He had no time to be idle. He filled up the twelve consecutive hours in doing good. Life, suffering and work only ended when He cried out under His direliction upon the Cross, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost. Allied to our humanity, He sympathized with our griefs, and as the grand climax of all wonder He gave His life a ransom for many.

The Evangelist tells us that rising up a great while before day He departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. He spent the last watch of the night in prayer and communion with the Father. While others were asleep and the busy world was quiet, He retired into darkness and solitude, and beneath the silent stars He kneeled to unbosom His griefs and struggle for Divine help and comfort. Peter and others followed after Him and said: "All men seek for Thee." Some were seeking from curiosity, some for the loaves and fishes, the sick to be healed, and the penitent to be saved. He replied: "Let us go into other towns that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth."

His labors were not to be confined to one place alone, but it seems that His mission was specially confined to the Jewish people. He was sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. These were to be hunted up in towns and villages, in the wilderness, among the mountains bleak and wild. He was the Good Shepherd, whose fold is the unnumbered Israel of God.

From the passage referred to we learn something of the habits of Christ about private prayer, and the same thing is often recorded of Him in the Gospel history that He prayed always and everywhere. When He was baptized it is said that while praying the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit, like descending flame, shaped itself into the form of a dove and lighted upon Him, and through the parting skies the voice of the Divine Father was heard. He prayed again in the hearing of the multitude, and God responded in thunder tones. When they would fain have taken Him to make Him a king He escaped from them, and retired into a mountain and spent the livelong night in prayer. At the grave of Lazarus His great heart was deeply troubled. Every fountain of emotion was unsealed. He prayed till the energies of the Godhead were stirred. The scepter fell from the hand of death, and Lazarus got up from the grave. Before sending out His disciples He spent the previous long night in prayer. On the Mount of Transfiguration He prayed till the fashion of His countenance was changed. His raiment was of snowy whiteness. Heaven and earth met in sweet and loving communion, and the Man of Sorrows put on the splendors of the Godhead.

You remember His intercessory prayer in the lighted upper chamber in Jerusalem, on the night before He

suffered. He prayed for His disciples and for all that should believe on Him, and for all their successors in the ministerial office down to the latest age of time. And when we approach the Garden of Gethsemane we behold the anguish and the blood, mysterious griefs, the fainting pangs and the bloody sweat. It was the hour and the power of darkness, and the Redeemer of mankind was all alone, and He poured out such strong crying and tears that the thrones of Heaven were moved with pity. Angels, it may be said, unstrung their harps. The songs of the glorified throng were hushed, for the Son of God was in tears and contending with the combined powers of darkness. And when on the Cross He hung faint and dying, His bosom heaving with the agonies of crucifixion, there came a dark and dashing wave over His spirit, and He wailed out: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

Christ did not pray merely to set us an example. It was not only His habit, but seemed to have been especially necessary. Sinless as He was, He set us an example of diligent communion with the Father. His connection with the Godhead did not render Him independent of the means of grace as a man. His very perfection was a perfection kept up through the exercise of prayer. He prayed always and never fainted. He had a great work to do. It was the salvation of the world. It was the reconciliation of God with man, a satisfaction to be paid to Divine justice, the solution of the problem of the Universe how man could be just with God, which the blood of birds and beasts and the rolling centuries had never explained.

He was exposed to the temptations and sorrow of humanity; was in all points tempted as we are yet

without sin. His heart often trembled amid the fearful conflicts with the powers of darkness, and now and then there were intermissions of the joys that He had with the Father before the world began. See Him as He weeps at the grave of Lazarus, as He weeps over Jerusalem. He sees the rising cloud, the approaching doom. He hears the cries of widowhood and orphanage. He sees the walls tumble down, the Temple destroyed, the blood flowing in torrents and mingling with Siloah's brook that flowed past by the oracles of God. See Him in the garden, hear His sad lamentation: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." He faints beneath the heavy burden of His Cross, apparently helpless and dying, and the Universe in mourning. He called up the resources of the Godhead. He bent the everlasting attributes of Deity and poured over the glory of a high and awful vindication.

The whole life of Christ had been one of humiliation and prayer. He said to His disciples on one occasion: "Ye who have been with me in my temptations," etc., etc. We see in the conduct of Christ the importance of private devotion. If He who was sinless and harmless prayed always, how much more should we who are compassed about with so many infirmities. A praying Master like Christ will always have praying servants. The spirit of adoption will make us call upon God. It is as natural almost for the good man to pray as to breathe. It is the pulse of Christianity, the index finger that points to crowns, kingdoms and rewards when the conflicts of life are past.

To be prayerless is to be Godless and Christless. How many there are bearing the Christian name who seldom pray, and have no stated times or places for

communion with God. They lie down at night and get up in the morning without prayer, and their children will rise up with the final Judge to condemn them in the last day. Prayer is the language of dependence. It impresses our own hearts with a sense of our wants, and we are commanded to pray always and never faint, to be instant in prayer; in everything by prayer and supplication, to let our request be known to God. Like the unfortunate widow, or the friend at midnight, we should urge our plea till our suit is gained.

We are in an enemy's land. Dangers stand thick through all the ground, and we must be found at our post and watching unto prayer. Prayer is the most powerful weapon which we can use to drive back the allied hosts. It enlists Omnipotence on our side, and the deep solicitude of the angelic throng. If we neglect to pray we shall lose ground, and the cheering light of God's countenance will be withdrawn. Prayer keeps up the communion between God and our souls. Prayer enables us to overcome temptation, to hide ourselves beneath His power while the tempest rages and His judgments are abroad in the world. By prayer we keep our reckoning out on the stormy sea, when skies are lowering, and true as the needle to the pole the Christian heart turns to its Father and God, and through the deepening gloom see the Star of Bethlehem. When we are sick, when tempted and tried, when loved ones are prostrate, dying or dead, oh, what a relief to the burdened heart to go and tell God all we feel and all we want.

In the private devotions of the Redeemer ministers are taught an important lesson. If they would be successful they must pray much. The Apostles spent their

time in this way, and Christ preached all day and then prayed all night. We should try and take God with us into the pulpit. There is too much at stake to be gathering flowers and loitering by the way. See Bunvan's pilgrim with his ears closed and deaf to every sound. As he runs he cries: "Life, life!" The fields are white to the harvest. Souls are perishing for whom the precious blood of the Cross was shed. Be in earnest, let His zeal consume you, pray till the door post shall move at the voice of Him that speaks, and remember that while you sow in tears that by and by you shall reap in joy. Souls who have been saved by your ministry will star and gem the crown of your rejoicing forever. God has promised to be with a faithful ministry to the end of time. Our preaching is powerless without Divine help.

On one occasion the congregation were waiting for their minister. Becoming impatient, they sent a messenger to know if he was coming. When he returned he said he did not suppose that the minister was coming. He seemed to be talking to some one, and saying that he could not go unless he went with him, and the person addressed did not say anything. An old Christian present understood it, and said, "He will be here directly." Soon the minister appeared. He had come down from the Mount of Communion and God was with him.

O, could we have followed the Redeemer into that lone solitary place where He prayed, and listened to the low murmur of His voice, borne out on the night winds. For whom was He praying? Was He praying for Himself and for others? Gethsemane and the Cross were before Him—the betrayal, the scourging and spit-

ting upon, the crown of thorns and the mock robe of purple. He would need Divine sympathy and help. He prayed, no doubt, for the Church through all periods of her history, till the grand culmination of her triumphs, when He would see the results of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. He was in deep communion with the Father. The human spirit was drinking in the joys of the Godhead, and it was an hour never to be forgotten. Could Peter and those that were with Him have drawn aside the veil they might have seen the lonely solitude all ablaze with the glory of Heaven, trooping angels and chariot wheels rolling in fire.

O, blessed Redeemer, He prayed till His life ended upon the Cross. And He has appeared in the presence of God for us, and the work of intercession is still going on. He stands before the Throne, He pleads our cause, He shows the print of the nails, the once open side and lacerated brow. And this is your Redeemer and mine, the faithful High Priest who has passed into the heavens.

We notice further in the passage a remarkable saying of our Lord as to the purpose for which He came into the world: "Let us go into other towns that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth. This was the great object for which I came into the world, to preach the Gospel, to publish the glad tidings, and throw wide open the gate of mercy to all mankind." Christ came to be a preacher and a teacher, to fulfill the Prophetical office. He was the Prophet greater than Moses, one who had been so long predicted. He left the glory which He had with the Father before the world began, to be an Evangelist upon the earth, to proclaim the way of peace, liberty to the captives, the

recovery or sight to the blind, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

God had but one Son, and made a preacher of Him, and has thus stamped the office of a preacher with infinite honor. It was His daily work—beyond the Jordan, and on this side, in private houses, in Jewish synagogues, in the Temple, in a fisherman's boat out on the Galilean Sea. At one time a mountain was His pulpit. A vast multitude thronged its summit and sides. The sermon we have recorded was a lengthy one. Several hours were employed in its delivery. But who got tired and wished Him to close? Wonder and amazement filled every bosom. They were held by some mysterious power. There was the majesty of His person, the rich tones of His voice, and His earnest zeal. And all was enforced by an authority based on His Divine character, as one who was holding back for a time the reversions of eternity and the doom of the final judgment.

Who would not love to have heard his wonderful discourse after His resurrection to the two disciples going to Emmaus. We are not astonished that their hearts burned under the inspiration of His word. He opened to them the Scriptures. He unlocked its mysteries. Types and shadows, like a gorgeous panorama, passed before the mind. The veil was lifted from Priesthood, sacrifice and burning altars. The old Prophets seemed resurrected, and Judean hills and valleys were made vocal with prophecy and fulfillment. For nearly eight miles of travel the once dead but now risen Christ continued His discourse. He gathered around the immortal group of holy men He had inspired to proph-

cey of Him. He impressed upon them the necessity of Christ's atoning death upon the Cross. And He placed the seal of truth upon all He had said and done, when He lifted His torn hands and His face toward Heaven, and the same familiar voice was heard in thanksgiving. Like a sudden apparition He vanished out of their sight. In the bewilderment of their joy and surprise they arose at once and returned to Jerusalem.

The heart of Christ during His earthly ministry was set upon His work. Standing by the Well of Samaria, He looked over the broad fields white to the harvest and His heart was saddened by the thought that the laborers were few. A few unlettered fishermen were about Him, timid and ready to fly at the approach of danger. But nothing could shake the purpose of the Redeemer, or divert Him from His one work. And it was the crowning glory of His ministry that He preached the Gospel to the poor. He came all the way from Heaven to tell them about the true riches, and how to lay up golden treasures in bags that wax not old. Though able to confound the wise, and unmask the sophistry of Scribes and Pharisees, yet we are told that the common people heard Him gladly.

He knew how to enter the sanctuary of the humble heart, and to sympathize with the sorrows of a common humanity. No word of reproach fell from His lips when the weeping penitent washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Though often the guest of the rich, and made His grave with them at the last, yet the poor ever found in Him a friend.

The religion preached and practiced by the Redeemer is the only religion that has no lines of distinction on,

partition walls. Religion is too priceless to be bought with money, and is offered so free that all may have it. Here, like the grave, the house appointed for all living, the rich and the poor meet together and are all one in Christ Jesus. A brotherhood that types the communion and fellowship of the heavenly home. In the parable of the great supper the servants were sent forth to call those that were bidden, and they all with one consent began to make excuse. They were then sent out into the highways and hedges, and streets and lanes of the city to compel them to come in. And those servants have never yet returned. They are still going on. All along through the ages the message is borne: "Come, for all things are ready."

When the Redeemer stood on Mount Olivet, Jerusalem lay spread out before Him. Its doomed and guilty population surged along its streets. There was Mount Calvary and the Roman Cross gleaming in the sunlight, and there was the vacant tomb in the Garden. The work of redemption was complete, and He gave the world-wide commission to His disciples: "Go preach my Gospel to every creature, and lo I am with you always even to the end of time." And they opened their mission in Jerusalem. His murderers had the first offers of life. Those that smote the rock drank first from the stream. Three thousand souls were converted under the first sermon. Some unlettered fishermen were so inspired by the Holy Ghost as to become linguists of every language under Heaven—in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Syriac and Persian and the dusky tribes of other lands listened entranced to the simple story of the Cross—His birth in Bethlehem, His preaching and miracles, His wondrous death and resurrection. The powers of

the world were arrayed against them. Everything was done to crush the infant cause. But wider spread the Heaven-kindled flame, and the gory banner streamed amid the dust and smoke of battle.

God's workmen have died, but the work has still gone on. A faithful ministry is the life of the Church. They are the benefactors of mankind, watchmen on the walls. They sweep the horizon and warn us of coming dangers. They sound the tocsin of war and lead out God's army to battle. They march in front. They are at the post of danger, and lead every forlorn hope. They mingle in the thickest of the fight and share in the spoils of victory—the trophies of the Cross. Many of them have fallen on the field of battle, but they fell with their faces to the foe, and with the shout of victory. Others have gathered up the fallen standard, and still the conflict rages. But we know in whom we have believed, and we are assured of final triumph. For He has said: "On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it."

We will not, like Ephraim, turn back in the day of battle, but feel like Joshua, that we are fully able to go over and possess the land. We will burn up every bridge behind us and push the battle to the gate, and, God helping, storm the strongest redoubt of hell. The great Captain of our salvation, mounted on the white horse of the Apocalypse, is riding down through the ages from conquering to conquer. The militant host will by and by fold up its banner, and marching to the music of the skies will gather where the warfare is over, and weapons red with recent fight shall adorn the Jasper walls, and songs of triumph mingle with the bright waters of the river of God.

A SERMON

ON THE DUTIES OF HUSBANDS TO THEIR WIVES, AND THE ANALOGY BETWEEN THE MARRIAGE RELATION AND CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. DEDICATED TO THE WIFE OF MY YOUTH—THE DEAR PARTNER OF MY JOYS AND SORROWS. THOUGH OUR HEADS ARE GROWING WHITE WITH THE FROST OF ACCUMULATING YEARS, YET WITH HEART AND HAND UNITED WE ARE JOURNEYING DOWN LIFE'S HILL TOGETHER, LONGING FOR THE REST OF HEAVEN AND THE HALLOWED JOY OF A WHOLE HOUSEHOLD GATHERED HOME TO GOD.

Text: And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with crying out, insomuch that He regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

Yet, ye say, wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, yet is she thy companion and the wife of thy covenant.

And did not He make one, yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.—Malachi, 2d chapter, 13, 14, 15 verses.

The text may seem novel and strange. In our long experience of more than half a century, and even carried in our mother's arms to the house of God, we do not remember to have ever heard a subject of this kind made the special theme of pulpit ministration. We are aware that the Bible in many places teaches the relative duties of husbands and wives, but our text is addressed only to the husbands.

It is not every preacher who could consistently preach on a subject like this, for it might be said to him, "Physician, heal thyself." It would be too much like

the Pharasee, who said, and did not ; or like Uzzah putting his hand upon the Ark of God. God loves consistency, and so do all right thinking men. But we humbly think, with our record as a husband for more than thirty years, we may be permitted to address you upon a subject which has so deeply and so painfully impressed our heart for a long time.

Some of you might prefer something more learned and profound—a discourse based upon some of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. We, too, love to hear whatever embraces depth and a wide range of thought and all that is grand and beautiful, but still we would love for the heart to feel. The preaching that leaves the heart unmoved is well nigh worthless. Much of the preaching of the present day is more adapted to books than the pulpit. In the language of the Prophet: “Not by might, nor by power, but my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” We should always try to take good with us into the pulpit, not to teach us logic or metaphysics, but to enable us to save our own souls, and the souls of those who hear us. We would remark, that many husbands are mistaken as to the sources of happiness—domestic happiness. It is not entirely in scientific talk, in books and newspapers, in a dignified reserve, a general deference to all his views, and that one mind should run the whole machinery at home. Bring everthing down to its last analysis, the *summum bonum* of the happiness of the domestic circle consist in little things—smiles, kind looks and words, a kind interest in all the affairs of the daily routine that makes up the home life. Remove all these from the home and what is there left that is worth living for? The world would be a wilderness, a vast Sahara, without a blooming flower, a sing-

ing bird or a babbling fountain. God has made these things a subject of special revelation. He looks in upon you as a husband, a patriarch, as the high priest of the household; and how fearful is your responsibility, and whatever He has referred to in His word He will bring up in the judgment.

It matters not what may be your social position, whether rich or poor, learned or unlearned, your duties are the same, and the same Throne of judgment awaits you all. We would then not only pass through the broad gateway, and up the graveled walk through flowering shrubbery, trees of evergreen, sparkling fountains, and all the adornments which wealth and science can throw around a palatial home, but we would enter the humble dwellings of the poor, pass into the sanctuary of the heart, and with authority inquire if there is love and peace at home.

A family of discordant elements is no type of the earthly paradise, of the Church of God, or the Everlasting Home. Domestic happiness is said to be the only bliss that has survived the Fall. Love, kindness and peace have much to do with the enjoyment of religion, and the hopes of the future life. There were many bad husbands in Malachi's time, who so cruelly treated their wives, that when they went to engage in the worship of God they only covered the altar with tears, with weeping and crying out. And even the Levites, the ministers of the sanctuary, were guilty of the same thing; and this is the reason God gives, why He could not accept their offerings. He could not receive them with good will at their hands.

Like priest, like people, the charge is against unkind husbands generally, in whatever station they may be

found—men who so embittered the lives of those they had promised to love and cherish that when they went up to the sanctuary to engage in its worship and songs of praise, instead of mingling with the rejoicing multitude they only covered the altar with weeping and tears.

You remember the history of Hannah, the wife of Elkanah. Though she was tenderly loved by her husband, yet she was so provoked by his other wife that she was in bitterness, and would go weeping to the altar of God at Shiloh. Now Elkanah was not the immediate cause of her sorrow, but he was so really. Had Hannah been the only wife, as she ought to have been, this distress would have been prevented, and she would not have found herself in alliance with a fellow wife, who only delighted to insult and aggravate her disappointment. And this was one of the ways in which the husbands here complained of converted the devotion of their wives into mourning, and the altar of God, designed as the sanctuary of worship and praise, is changed into a place of refuge and appeal, made vocal with the cries of crushed and bleeding hearts, reminding us of the Boachim of the Old Testament, where the angel addressed the people, or the oak of weeping, under which Deborah was buried.

The multiplicity of wives has been not only the fruitful cause of crime and wrong, but of untold miseries; and though practiced for so many ages, it was never justified; it was only permitted. The design of God is plainly seen in creation—that man should have but one wife. God had the residue of the Spirit—ample resources to make more wives than one, but Divine wisdom and goodness ordered it otherwise. Adam was

created, and from his side a rib was taken, out of which woman was made, and the twain shall be one—one in interest, heart and hope, one in joy and in sorrow, one in the ministry of love, one in destiny and the everlasting communion of the skies. God ordained this state for the purpose of purity, peace and happiness. He made them one, so as to promote domestic enjoyment, and form an asylum for virtue and religion. The practice, which obtained once, of having more wives than one cannot be reconciled with the design of God in creation.

During the life and times of Christ, in the brief evangelic history of the incarnation, we meet with no instances of persons having more wives than one. It was forbidden among the Greeks and Romans; and hence we find no special enactment against it in the New Testamenti but an inspired Apostle has said: "Let every man have his own wife, and every wife her own husband." The Scriptures give but one ground for divorce, but legislative bodies have added others. Bad men have taken advantage of this loose legislation, and how many homes have been darkened by sorrow, and virtue has wept at the spectre of its own ruin.

But we would not enlarge upon this subject. We leave it to the decisions of the final day, to the Scriptures of truth, to the adjudication of the Judge of the quick and dead. But the complaint in the text is against unkind husbands. No man, says the Apostle, ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it. We feel disinclined to refer to bodily violence, and yet how often it has occurred. The priests of Baal cut themselves with knives till their blood streamed over the sacrifice and the altar. And yet there are men, miscalled husbands, who have abused their other self

and left on them marks of violence, thus perjuring themselves before God and Heaven. But this is not the only way the altar may be covered with tears. She may be deprived of a needful support through idleness or drunkenness, reduced to the greatest straits, and her heart wrung with anguish, to hear her children cry for bread. But her happiness may be destroyed by unkindness and neglect, by angry looks and words, by rude and churlish manners. Even a frown may send a chill to the heart, sting like a scorpion, and leave a deadly rankling behind. She may be reduced to the mortification of seeing her husband restless and uneasy at home, and contriving some excuse to get away, fonder, it would seem, of any other company than the society of his wife. His smiles are for company, his frowns for home. He carries all the vexations of his business home, and sits up in moody silence. His presence is like a skeleton in the closet. He clouds everything and sends a death chill into the heart of the pale and imploring woman he took from a once happy home, from all its tender endearments. This home is now the only bright spot in all the waste of memory.

Like a rose she is fading. She will soon find a quiet retreat in the grave, and her redeemed spirit will be among those that love her. Unkindness and want of sympathy have hurried her to a premature grave. The husband escapes all punishment, for no human statute covers the case. But what says the Bible: "Be sure your sin will find you out." And again: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." Time and the fleeting years do not weaken the force of obligation. Those pledges of lifelong fidelity

and devotion, made twenty, thirty or forty years ago, are just as binding as if you were this hour standing before the man of God and plighting your vows of love.

We would notice, in the second place, the aggravation of the offence—she is the wife of thy youth. The reference is to early marriage, and seems to be a countenance of the usage. There are marriages which appear very much like a business transaction—the rule of loss and gain is worked; marriages of convenience, making provisions for age, sickness and death. But the only connection to which God, in His word, ever alludes, and from which He reasons, is the wife of youth. To such an object there belongs a peculiar affection—fresh, simple and pure—the first attachment. In the rosy morning, in the early spring time, with heart and hand united, they set out upon the journey of life together. It matters not what object may be removed, or what may be the wreck of earthly fortune, there is nothing around which the memory of man will linger so long as the image of the wife of his youth. Of her with whom he passed the delicious season of virtuous courtship; of her, who first inspired him with the sweets of domestic happiness; of her, who first sent the wondrous thrill through his bosom when he felt the parental relation; on her knees his first child clasped its little hands to pray; on his strong arm she leaned in their walks about home, and to the house of God.

And what if the wife of youth is growing old? If infirmities appear and the curling locks are turning to silvery white, and there are the pains and feebleness of approaching age? The rose could not always bloom, but the fragrance still remains. Now is the time for an unselfish affection. You will remember her who

has ever been to you a ministering angel. Your happiness has been dearer to her than her own; in all your afflictions, she has been afflicted; her love and sympathy have often cheered your heart, and sent a rift into the darkest cloud. Take God for your example, and go and do likewise, when He says in His word, "I remember thee—the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." She has shared with you the joys and sorrows of a long lifetime; together you have kneeled to see your children die; great sorrows have spread their shadows along your pathway; each has tried to comfort the other, and kiss away the bitter tears.

The affectionate, Christian husband will not forget the kindness of youth, or the mellow scenes of ripening age; to him, his old companion is as fair as she was. The raven curls have changed to white; the cheek is a well written page, and the rose has long since faded; but the eye, growing dim, still sparkles with the old love; the pale, thin hand, marked with blue lines, is often placed on your brow, and together, in memory, you live over the joyous scenes of years ago. He can see more clearly now into the depths of the pure and gentle spirit in which he has confided so long, and, with advancing years, she becomes more dear, for he is reminded that he will soon lose the treasure of his heart. The songs that once made the music of home are not so melodious now, but there is a richer undertone, like the song of the boatman nearing the shore. She seems to have caught the inspiration of hallelujahs from afar.

I read, a few years ago, of an aged and Christian couple celebrating their golden wedding—the fiftieth

anniversary of their wedded life. Children, grandchildren and other friends were present. It was a joyous occasion. There were songs, music and congratulations, while a spirit of piety pervaded the whole. The aged grandfather did, just as he had done fifty years before—he took his old companion by the hand, led her to the piano; she took her seat and played and sung as in the long ago. It was a refreshing time to all, and cheering to the hearts of the two aged ones who were still lingering among them. With heart and hand united, they were journeying down the hill together—the declining sun, the lengthening shadows, the fast approaching night, mysterious voices and the homesickness. In tremulous tones they may now sing,

Beyond the sunset's radiant glow,
There is a brighter world, I know.

No wonder that Abraham wept over his beloved Sarah, as she lay in her tent cold and dead, and that he bought a burial place, where they would sleep side by side till the resurrection morning, and then be caught up together to meet the glorified Redeemer, and be forever with each other, and with their triumphant Lord.

But our Prophet goes on to speak of another aggravation of the offence. She is thy companion. What a lovely and becoming idea of the marriage relation. She is not your menial or slave, but a helpmeet, a companion. She is not like any other companion. Brothers and sisters are companions, but they are so involuntarily from their peculiar relation; but she is your companion by choice. Some may be your companions for a time, but she is your companion for life. Your interests are one, your cares and comforts are one. Though you may be distinguished for thought, she excels you in

sympathy. You have the harder difficulties of life to contend with—to bear the burden and heat of the day, to perform the labors of the field, and of the different professions. On your shoulders rests the responsibilities of government; you must guide the ship of State, resist invasion, and when your country demands it, face the cannon's mouth and pass through the smoke and thunder of battle. She is the presiding divinity of your home—lays the molding hand of destiny upon your children; her attributes are the safeguard of all that is virtuous and good; and these sterner qualities and more delicate sensibilities combine in wedded life and make a harmonious completeness. And how lamentable is the fact, that in a thousand instances, and more, this companionship is not carried into the highest and noblest region of its exercise—we mean religion. They are not walking together as Zacharias and Elizabeth, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. One goes into the presence of God, to pour out her heart in devotion, while the other stands without, waiting till it is over. One sends up a petition to heaven, singly signed; one lone, plaintiff voice passes along through cloudland, among the stars and the shining ranks of angels, and murmurs over the bosom of God, when Christ has said, in His word, that if two of you shall agree on earth, and touching anything they may ask, it shall be done of My Father. How strange that one should be walking in the way everlasting and the other the road to death.

A time will come when many tender relations will be broken up forever; a dividing line will be drawn, and the impassable gulf be fixed. O, ye husbands and wives, remember that you are moral and accountable beings,

and the present life is only the threshold of existence. Be companions in faith and godliness; walk together as heirs of the grace of life; take sweet counsel together, and go to the house of God in company. Walk together over the land of revelation; survey its boundless prospects; gather of its fruits and flowers; talk the language of Canaan—the speech of souls redeemed; and if your way be rough, and the thorn pierces your foot, try and smooth it with hope and cheer it with song. Then your children will not be perplexed by contrary examples and counsels; lovely in life, in death not divided, the separation will only be temporary. Like Enoch's walk with God, your journey of life will end in heaven, where Abraham finds his beloved Sarah again, more beautiful than when she stood beside him in her bridal robes. All those sainted ones who have gone on before, and are watching and waiting now; who ever and anon cry out, he comes! he comes! angels, harping with their harps, and the redeemed, with glad hallelujahs, will celebrate the nuptial hour, the blessed reunion where partings are unknown.

But, as a third aggravation of the offence, she is the wife of thy covenant. Covenant here, in this connection, means the marriage contract; and by the very mention of this, the husband is called upon to remember that the vows of God are upon him. The virtuous heart may feel that love is more binding than law, but some sanction of the covenant engagement has been required through all the ages. The sacred relation has been fenced and guarded, and these covenant engagements are equally binding upon the parties. We read of covenants in olden times. The great covenant of grace with Abraham had the seal of circumcision. Under the new dis-

pensation, it was ratified by the precious blood of Christ. The rainbow, with its beautifully blending colors, is God's sign of a covenant between Himself and the earth, His unfailing pledge, from age to age, that the earth shall no more be destroyed by water. And it types another covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; more stable than the vapory cloud, or the varied colors of the bow; firm as the pillars of the Everlasting Throne. And these all throw the prestige of their sanctity and obligation around the marriage contract. Those pledges of love and devotion made to each other, and made in the presence of God and witnesses, are binding as an oath, and sacred, like words of Holy Writ. Our Prophet charges those bad husbands as having broken the covenant and covered the altar with tears, with weeping and crying out. You remember your promises to love and cherish in sickness and health, and that she should have your undivided affection till death. And have you done all this? What says your own heart? What has the Recording Angel written? What will the judgment disclose? what images rise up from the chambers of memory?—a pale, sad face, marked with the lines of sorrow; eyes often filled with tears; the heart crushed by unkindness and neglect. And yet she is your other self—your helpmeet, your companion; the wife of your youth, and the wife of your covenant.

How many have been false to their engagements; a loving, trusting heart has been surrendered to you; you promised love, tenderness and protection, and have been false to every promise. If a heathen king would not go back upon his oath, but culminated the crimes of his wicked life by having the head of John the Baptist taken off, what will be the condemnation of many

husbands who live in Bible lands, and under the bonds of a covenant sacred and binding as an oath. God cannot hear your prayers, He will not regard your offering, it will be a lame sacrifice, and He is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. In company you may have been all kindness and attention, but God has followed you home; He has seen you in the family—your rough and boorish manners; He has seen you when you have thrown off all restraint. In the Church and before the world, you have been more upon your guard, but in your own dwelling you have given yourself more latitude; but God is there, and is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You pass as respectable and kind, and no one may suspicion you; you may keep up Bible reading and family worship, and yet cover the altar with tears. God is the witness, and will be the final Judge, and He cannot receive your offerings; He will not answer your prayers; He warns you to take heed to your spirit, and for none to deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. You may plead excuses for your conduct; you may have fits of goodness like Ephraim; you may try to quiet the lashes of your conscience, but the Bible is the standard of judgment; by it you will be judged, and from its awful denunciations there will be no refuge or appeal.

There are thousands of fathers and mothers whose gray hairs are going down with sorrow to the grave. They have raised their children tenderly; like olive plants they have grown up; home has been a sanctuary of love; here were tranquil scenes and the music of happy voices, but some one, like the great deceiver of our race, has entered this earthly Eden. You have given up your child, but soon found out that she

was sacrificed—led like a lamb to the slaughter. She had given her heart and hand to one who soon disclosed his true character—that he was incapable of appreciating woman's worth, her wealth of affection, her delicate nature and her peculiar sorrows. He does not try to make home happy. While making others miserable, he is miserable himself. This is just as it should be; it follows like cause and effect. Conscience will often lash him, the ghosts of broken vows will rise up, and there will be premonitions of a coming doom. No one can be religious who disregards his sacred vows and lives in violation of what God has commanded. I would not have the feelings of some husbands for the world when God is about to take the pale sufferer to Himself, and the hand is on the wall writing the children motherless. How can they ever forget the dying look, the feeble shudder, as they approach the bed of death. Though she makes no complaint—no reference to the sorrows of the past, but her dying looks, her throbbing breast and the turning away of the glassy eye, all speak a language which he can understand—unkindness and neglect have hurried her to a premature grave.

This is no fancy sketch; we are not drawing upon the imagination. The revelations of the great judgment day will confirm the truth of all we have said, and infinitely more. Many who are now dreaming of heaven will wake up by-and-by in eternal disappointment.

How bitter must be the remorse of many as they stand by the graves of the wives of their youth. How gladly would they give the world if they only had them back—if they could only atone for the past—if they

could only hear some familiar voice from the spirit land, saying, it is all forgiven. But how oppressive is this grave-yard silence; the crushed heart is cold and silent forever; the eye so used to tears is sealed in death's lasting sleep; the once anguished bosom is pressed now by the clods of the valley, and there is neither voice nor hearing. The shadow of a great sorrow has fallen upon his pathway; his children are motherless, their tears reproach him, while the cry of the whippoorwill and the moaning night winds are eloquent to arouse deep emotions of his troubled heart; but Judgment and the opened Books will disclose the whole to an assembled Universe. The Christian wife and mother is done with suffering; she is gone to the rest of Heaven—to the home of spirits redeemed. No longer lonely, millions of happy souls will bear her company; no more hours of silent night-watching; love is the feeling of every heart; kindness flows from the lips of all, and the great sorrows of earth are swallowed up in the eternal joys of Heaven.

Marriage is a Divine institution, instituted in the time of man's innocence. God performed the first ceremony. He was both the Administrator and the Witness. The incarnate Son of God wrought His first miracle at a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, and it has the Divine sanction and approval through all the ages. And this institution of God is designed to type the mystical union between Christ and the Church. God in His Word, referring to the conversion of the soul—to its happy espousal, says: "I am married unto you." Christ is the living head of His mystical body—the Church. And you are commanded to love your wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

Here you have the standard and the specific command—the Pauline measure of the husband's love for his wife.

How great was the love of Christ—dying for us while we were yet sinners; laying aside the glory which He had with the Father before the world began, He embraced humanity with its tears; and as the culmination of all mystery he expired like a malefactor upon the Cross. He died for us—the spotless Lamb of God offered for the sin of the world. In His wondrous death, and shedding of His vicarious blood, He laid deep and broad the foundations of the Church. The heavens darkened over the tragic scene—the graves of the sleeping dead were opened. More than eighteen hundred years have rolled away and heaven has never recovered from the sacred consternation.

And you are to love your wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. You are to share her sorrows, and multiply her joys, and anticipate her wants. Her pale face will often be lifted imploring your help; her constitution is feeble, her nature is delicate, and her sorrows peculiar. Help her, then, along life's thorny way; stand like a ministering angel about the bed of death; smooth the dying pillow; wipe away the gathering dews; give the cooling drink, and with your strong arms lay her gently down to her last sleep. How dark then will be your earthly home. The very silence will be eloquent of grief and bereavement, and with approaching night, stars come out, one after another, in the sky, and the lonely dog sets up the mournful howl. O, what would we do now were it not for the consolations and hopes of religion—for the life after death, and the reunion of kindred hearts in the eternal

wedlock of Heaven, when the grave shall yield up its dead, and God shall give us back our own.

The Church is called the bride, the Lamb's wife, referring to the dark and emblematical design of God in the creation of woman, to the wonders of the incarnation and purple fountain of the Cross. The agencies are at work, the evangelic influences are spreading that shall redeem and perfect the Church and present it as a chaste virgin unto Christ. We hear it in the language of prophecy, we see it in type and symbol, and in the precious atonement of His blood, in the baptism of the eleven tongues of fire, the trials and triumphs of the Church and her long warfare through the ages. We hail the approaching day, the bridal hour, when the heavenly nuptials will be celebrated and the glorious visions of the Apocalypse be realized. We have glimpses now and then of the oncoming glory of the bridegroom and the gems and jewels of the bride. The Christain astronomer sees far away in the misty deeps of Heaven a bright world journeying this way. It comes! it comes! flashing across the track of suns and systems, and when it sweeps into the orbit of our world a redeemed Church may throw up her glad hands on high and shout: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The lone Prophet of the Cross on His sea-girt isle saw the New Jerusalem descend from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. The great marriage supper will be prepared, and Christ will lead forth His jeweled bride along the streets of shining gold, all radiant with His love and bright as the sun, the wonder of angels, of the thrones and principdoms of the sky. Here are the members of His mystical body.

They are counted up, not one of them is lost. They come from all ages, from all latitudes and longitudes. God's great family are all at home, home at last and forever. Weeping and war have ended, and the golden key of the Apocalypse has unlocked the last tomb, and now in tireless songs and shouts of triumph they begin the everlasting jubilate of Heaven. And all the angels will be there. The morning stars and the sons of God who rejoiced in the morning of creation, when the new-made world, like a pendant jewel hung below the skies as their mission field to the end of time.

There too will be seen the Angel of the Annunciation, and the great multitude who celebrated in songs the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem; and the Mighty One who broke the Roman seal, rolled back the stone from the door of the Sepulchre, and gathering about him his robes of light kneeled down as the Lord of angels was passing out of the tomb. And the twenty thousand who shouted the triumphs of His coronation hour, and in chariots of fire swept along the pathway of cloud, while the princely herald cried to the astonished thrones: "Fly wide ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and let the King of Glory come in." And they will all be there, and the many thousand who have watched and guarded around our earthly homes, and borne away our friends and children home to God. And all the thronging ones who gather about the gates of pearl, or on the heights, and have shouted through the golden cycles: "They come! they come!" All the elderborn will unite with the blood-washed throng and the heavenly nuptials will go on forever. Heaven will be a state of glorious vision and of everlasting triumph.

John, on the lonely Isle of Patmos, saw a woman clothed with the sun, standing on the moon and crowned with the stars, and her wails of anguish have been borne down through the ages. Woman was first in the transgression, and in the arithmetic of God's counsel her sorrows were multiplied. But, like the pillar of cloud, there is a bright side. She is the mother of the world's Redeemer. Angels have brought them messages from the Heavenly Throne.

Miriam led the concert on the shore of the Red Sea, and struck the interlude of the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Deborah celebrated in verse and song the triumph of Israel. Salem's weeping daughters followed the Man of Sorrows on to Calvary. They stood near His cross and gathered tearfully about His tomb and saw how He was laid. They received first the news of His rising again. "Last at His cross, and first at His tomb." They have been martyrs for the Truth, tortured and burned at the stake; and to-day their spirits cry with the martyred ones near the Throne.

Woman is a Heaven instituted type of the Church in her militant and in her triumphant state. The Church has her militant conflicts and trials, and so with woman. Many of your sorrows are only known to Heaven. It faithful to your God, your good times are all ahead. Your tired feet shall rest, and your anxious and troubled heart, for there are no empty cradles in Heaven. Angels are the guardians of your children gone on the summerlands. These jewels of your heart gather in groups along the banks of the bright river, watching and waiting, and with flowers of immortal bloom they are weaving for your future crowns.

Mark, what was that I heard, like the sound of some

spirit voice over the silent sea? Was it my sainted mother looking this way, and her unconscious fingers falling upon the strings of her golden lute? O, thou loved and sainted one, send back your spirit to guide my frail bark over life's stormy sea to Heaven.

